THE SOVIET CULTURAL SCENE 1956–1957

Editors

Walter Z. Laqueur ★ *George Lichtheim*

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1956–1957

WALTER Z. LAQUEUR

GEORGE LICHTHEIM

This book provides a unique examination of the swiftly changing cultural and ideological trends in the Soviet Union over the past two years. Composed of essays selected from the monthly (now quarterly) review *Soviet Survey*, the book is a critical and well-balanced analysis of Soviet culture, and the only such analysis in English to use Soviet and East European source materials exclusively.

Soviet Survey, the periodical, has been published since 1956 by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, with the cooperation of scholars and publicists from many countries. Until recently Walter Z. Laqueur was editor of this Review. The essays presented here are those which provide commentary of permanent value on the most significant developments in Soviet literature, philosophy, historiography, and the social sciences in general. Although Russia is the country most closely examined, the rest of the Communist bloc is not neglected. There are in particular two very useful articles on Poland and Hungary, studying the impact there of the Kremlin's "thaw" in 1956.

Other topics treated in *The Soviet Cultural Scene* are indicated by the titles of some of the essays: Modernists vs. Social Realists in Music, Questions and Answers on Painting, The Soviet Attitude toward Religion, and A Soviet View of Psychoanalysis. Soviet orthodoxy controlling these and all other cultural matters has radically changed in emphasis since Stalin's death; these changes, as well as the new restrictions imposed by today's orthodoxy, are more clearly revealed here than ever before.

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EDITORS

WALTER Z. LAQUEUR

AND

GEORGE LICHTHEIM

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PREFACE

THE material brought together in this volume represents a selection from the monthly (now quarterly) review *Soviet Survey*,* published since the beginning of 1956 under the auspices of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, with the co-operation of scholars from various countries. Technical and other considerations have ruled against completeness, but it is hoped that in their present form these essays will prove useful both to the general reader and to the more specialised student of Soviet affairs, in particular to those engaged in the day-to-day study of intellectual life in the USSR—from Communist party theory to the more remote by-ways of scientific, philosophical, literary, and artistic work and controversy in the Soviet orbit.

Judging from the cordial reception given to the review from which this material has been selected, there appears to be scope for what is in essence a running commentary on the rapidly changing cultural and social scene in the USSR (and to some extent in the neighbouring East European countries). If such a commentary lacks the advantages which go with more cloistered investigations, it may be thought to benefit from the urgent attention given to those critical turning-points which mark the sudden eruption of new forces. The de-Stalinisation campaign is a case in point; the upheaval in Eastern Europe in the autumn of 1956 likewise had an immediate impact on the manner in which the Communist party in the USSR sought to affirm its ideological control. Here the political element impinges so

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directly on the cultural domain that the title of this volume might appear in some degree misleading in its implied scope. Yet this difficulty cannot be avoided, since in the Soviet orbit everything leads back to the rule of the Communist party. Unless its internal crises are understood, the discussion of intellectual tendencies as such becomes sterile.

A word about the distinction between unsigned editorial matter and signed contributions: the editors owe a debt of gratitude to the writers and research students who have contributed to the *Survey* since its expansion from what was originally a brief monthly bulletin of current affairs: their work has been signed. The editors are directly responsible only for their own comments and analyses, which invariably appeared without any signature, and in general represented a joint effort to communicate with the reader. This distinction has been kept clear, in order not to burden others with responsibility for views which they may not in all cases wholly share. The essays are reprinted as they appeared originally in the *Survey*, except for minor verbal changes made necessary by their publication in book form.

W. Z. Laqueur,
G. Lichtheim.

London,
January, 1958.

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Part One

Literature and The Arts

1

INTRODUCTION *

In autumn, 1953, a leading Soviet literary magazine published the first part of a novel which attracted great interest and provided the name for a whole period: Ilya Ehrenburg's *The Thaw*. This spring the second and last part of Ehrenburg's novel was published—and what an anti-climax it is, after all the hopes and expectations raised. In more than one way it reflects the general retreat from the thaw in many fields, after some promising stirrings in 1953–1954. The main theme of the current survey is what we call with some reluctance the "new line" in Soviet literature and the arts. It will be apparent from what follows that the changes introduced since the beginning of the year have been less spectacular than the corresponding reorientation in scientific disciplines such as historiography, to which reference was made in the preceding survey. In particular, there is as yet no trace of the kind of ferment that has lately been visible among the intellectuals in Poland. The "cult of the individual" has been condemned, in the standardised manner which at present constitutes the mark of the new conformism, but there is a noticeable reluctance, due no doubt to nervousness, to proceed from this to more drastic questioning of accepted values.

It would be wrong to overlook the extent to which official doctrines and practices have recently been subjected to something like genuine criticism by individual writers, composers, and other artists. But while, *e.g.*, in Poland, the Party authorities have to some extent accepted, and in a sense even promoted, these criticisms, in the USSR they show no sign of willingness to do so. Such questioning of accepted official standards as has made itself heard here and there tends to be written off by those in authority as un-Leninist behaviour, particularly in connection with the sacrosanct doctrine of "socialist realism." The only

* Chaps. 1–4 first appeared in *Soviet Survey*, 1956, No. 6.

real break with the immediate past thus relates to the virtually complete abandonment of the previously practised adulation of Stalin.

This conservatism can be variously interpreted. Its proximate cause would seem to lie in official fear of raising the floodgates and letting the pent-up emotions sweep over the entire cultural landscape. It has to be remembered in this connection that the established authorities in the field of official culture were for the most part deeply involved in the practices of the Stalin era and are in no position to inaugurate a genuine revaluation; more, they may have cause to fear for their social standing should the process of liberalisation lead to a rejection of the cultural model they helped to establish. This uneasiness presumably accounts for the mingled irritation and concern they tend to display in the face of growing rank-and-file pressure for a genuine reformation. It becomes clear as the weeks go by that their chief efforts are directed towards limiting the process of de-Stalinisation. In particular they appear anxious that the younger generation should not become infected with " dangerous thoughts."

Vigilantism in the arts takes various forms. Its manifestations are not always as ludicrous as in the following excerpt from a recently published address by B. V. Ioganson, Vice-President of the Soviet Academy of Arts, which may stand as an example of the perpetuation of unadulterated Zhdanovism in the post-Stalinist era of Soviet life :

> Feeling that their destruction is inevitable, the enemy forces make use of all and any means—openly and secretly, cunningly and by stealth. They devote particularly insistent attention to the young, playing up for their benefit the so-called freedom of culture. This is so easy—taking hold of some unsuccessful work and using it to condemn all our mistakes. . . . If the listeners are naïve and ideologically immature, if they lack practical experience, it is very difficult for them to see through such a plausible phrase-monger. . . .
>
> Among our young people, it is particularly easy to exploit the (alleged) self-sustaining significance of artistic content in painting. First, one makes the return to the Russian impressionists; then, by way of awakening a fascination with Renoir and Degas (although Serov, Repin and Surikov are greater

painters !), one leads them to Cézanne, and thus the basic aim (of corrupting the young) is achieved.[1]

This is one sample of Zhdanovism among many. It is eloquent of the difficulties encountered by the authorities in the semi-liberalised climate already evident before the XXth Congress, and it points to the problems they have increasingly had to face in more recent months.

Postscript. Cultural vigilantism did not prevent the appearance of literary works containing a great deal of social criticism and resentment of "socialist realism." One of the boldest was *Station Winter* by the talented young poet, E. Evtushenko. Shortly before the Twentieth Congress, *Novy Mir*, edited by Simonov, began to publish novels and poems which soon came under sharp Party attack. Notable among them were Dudintsev's *Not by Bread Alone* and Kirsanov's *Seven Days of the Week*. Other periodicals followed suit. The literary ferment was particularly intense in Moscow, where the magazines *Moskva* and *Moskovskii Literator* came under fire. The first volume of *Literaturnaya Moskva*, an annual, had many unorthodox features, the most striking among them the bold symbolic poem, *The Morning*, by a young newcomer, R. Rozhdestvenski. Regional periodicals like *Priboy*, edited in Leningrad, displayed similar tendencies. The journals of the Ukrainian, Armenian, and Kazakh Writers' Unions were all condemned for deviationism.

The short second "thaw" came to an end in summer 1956 and the attack on the heretical writers was heightened. They replied with what became known as the "heroic feat of silence." However, the "lag between life and literature," a term often used to denote literary nonconformism, can have another meaning. Works written during the "thaw" appeared only after the Party line had changed; several were published when the intellectual climate had already begun to freeze. The most prominent example of this was the second volume of *Literaturnaya Moskva*, which appeared early in 1957. It was much more outspoken than the first; it contained *The Levers*, by Yashin, describing the transformation of ordinary people into unthinking automata when carrying out Party instructions; *A Visit Home*, by Zhdanov, a melancholy reflection on the fate of Soviet peasants; and *The Light in the Window*, by Nagibin, which illustrates social differences in Soviet society.

For some time the "fat periodicals" continued to reflect the literary ferment, until the attacks on them culminated in their condemnation for "serious ideological errors and one-sided representation of reality" by the presidium of the Soviet Writers' Union in May 1957. The new neo-Zhdanovist line was officially laid down by Mr. Khrushchev in his speeches "On the lag between life and literature," which were reproduced in all Soviet literary magazines as a guide for Soviet writers and hailed as "a great contribution to Marxist-Leninist esthetics" (*Moskva*, October 1957).

[1] B. V. Ioganson, "On the Creative Work of Young Artists" in *Voprosy Izobrazitelnovo Iskusstva*, 2nd series, 1955.

2

THE CRITICS MARK TIME

COMPARED with the sudden upsurge of critical spontaneity in Poland and Hungary, there is little to report from the Soviet literary scene. This may be a mere question of time-lag—the XXth Congress after all could not at once release a flood of new creativity. There has not, however, been any sign of the tremor which went through the literary world in some of the satellites: a veritable shudder of relief at the disappearance of official shackles. While some time must necessarily elapse before Soviet novelists and playwrights make use of their new opportunities (if such exist), there is no lack of programmatic writings outlining, for the benefit of authors and critics, what the new novels and plays *ought* to be like, and the tenor of these pronouncements is far from encouraging. It can be summed up as an admission of past "mistakes," coupled with an admonition to those concerned not to fall into the "extreme" of imagining that all restraints are gone and that *partiinost* (party-mindedness) no longer rules supreme.

The new line is laid down with characteristic thoroughness in a programmatic editorial in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (May 8, 1956) which begins by paying lip-service to the now orthodox condemnation of the Stalin cult in its grosser forms, as having had a harmful effect on literature—poetry in particular, but also the theatre. This admission, however, is immediately followed by a reminder that these excesses after all represented only *one* aspect of the Soviet scene: there were writers—such as Sholokhov, Fadeyev, Fedin, Leonov, Gladkov and others—who during this same period went on "drawing their inspiration from the people." In consequence they were able to avoid the sin of toadying to persons in authority, and their work reflected the "gigantic forward strides" of Soviet society.

This significant restriction of self-criticism leads *Literaturnaya Gazeta* to a second consideration: true, the practice of

embellishing the facts which went on throughout this period was blameworthy; but the " vulgar realists " (Ehrenburg's *Thaw* and Panova's *Seasons of the Year* are mentioned in this context) were and are no less one-sided and mistaken. Their " naturalism " remains a heresy to be fought by the orthodox—who incidentally have little to fear from Ehrenburg, if the second and concluding part of his *Thaw* (now available in the April number of *Znamya*) is any guide.

But there is more to come: the editorial proceeds to an outright attack on those who after the XXth Congress demanded greater freedom for the writer:

> It is surprising to find that there are people who have forgotten all about the Party-spirit in literature; people who in their zeal for what they call creative many-sidedness in literature urge an attitude of *tout pardonner*. There are people who call upon us to revert to the state of affairs in the early and middle twenties, and who affirm that everything was right and perhaps even ideal at that time.

It appears furthermore that at some recent writers' meetings there were attempts to debunk Mayakovsky and Stanislavsky, while others present suggested that there should be a reconsideration of the official attitude towards the satirical writings of Zoshchenko, which Zhdanov had singled out for condemnation in 1946–1948 . . .

> . . . as though we had lost all ideological and aesthetic scruples and were unable to distinguish good work from bad. Some go even further and affirm that our literature no longer retains its former realistic content and close connection with the people, and that literary criticism has been paralysed and degraded. . . .

All of which, in the opinion of the editorialist, is unacceptable to the Soviet public, being an expression of a nihilistic desire to devalue all that has been created in Soviet art and literature. The leader-writer regrets that some unnamed critics have come forward with extremely unreasonable proposals. The details are left vague, but one rather broad hint is developed: " Side by side with light-minded demagogues, there are others who speak with an alien voice: literature, they say, should not

be the servant of politics." This, of course, is totally unacceptable:

> Soviet literature was, is and will remain powerful because of its commitment to the Party, its direct link with the policy of the Communist Party and the Soviet State. . . . Since the XXth Congress we have become spiritually richer, more perspicacious. We shall be able to do more and to do it more quickly. And that is the main thing.

There are other signs that those in authority have been alarmed by some of the interpretations placed upon the decisions of the XXth Congress:

> There have of late been unhealthy tendencies among some politically immature writers and artists. There has been a conciliatory attitude towards bourgeois art—the outcome of a misguided attempt to extend the co-existence thesis to the plane of ideology. Certain writers and artists, who in the past were rightly censured by Soviet society, now seek revenge, and there have been all sorts of attacks against Party leadership in the fields of literature and the arts.[1]

Thus far these strictures are directed against anonymous offenders—no names are mentioned, but that may come. The dilemma facing the authorities is, of course, a genuine one: a frank discussion would inevitably lead to demands for a much more radical break with the past than is likely to occur under the present leadership. Nor is the intelligentsia united on this issue. Too many influential writers have a stake in the Stalinist era, and cannot afford to see its works condemned wholesale. To describe what is now going on as a rear-guard action is to overlook the fact that the Stalinist old guard is still in effective control, though somewhat shaken in its self-confidence and willing to make minor concessions to the opposition.

At the ideological level the conflict tends to revolve, as before, around the key concepts of *iskrennost* (sincerity) and *partiinost*—best translated, perhaps, as "party-mindedness." The last major debate around this perennial issue started in the winter of 1953–54 when Pomerantsev put forward the daring (by

[1] "The Leninist Principle of Literary *Partiinost*," *Kommunist*, 1956, No. 5, p. 70.

Soviet standards) proposition that " the degree of sincerity in a literary work is the principal criterion " for judging it. This heresy was " decisively rejected," *i.e.*, promptly suppressed by literary officialdom, when it was put forward, its suppression coinciding with the sudden end of the first " thaw." Its implications were obvious, for " sincerity " is the subjective corollary of unvarnished realism, *i.e.*, the exact opposite of *partiinost*, which stands for determination to make reality conform with Party ideology, as well as voluntary subjection to the kind of control exercised by Zhdanov. While at the moment there are expectations of another " thaw," the critics of officialdom have not taken the lead in reviving this particular terminological debate; but their opponents have: to make sure that everyone understands what is meant by the present official policy, *Kommunist*, 1956, No. 5, once more, in a programmatic article, puts forward the familiar doctrine: great works of art can be produced only on the basis of " Leninist " æsthetics (which in effect means Zhdanovist æsthetics—for Lenin bequeathed no coherent doctrine to his successors, and what is now called Leninism is a crystallisation of later attitudes). *Kommunist* goes out of its way to praise the Party resolutions of 1946–1948, which were inspired by Zhdanov, and to pay tribute to the recent orthodox counter-attacks against the " Hu Feng clique " in China and the " right-wing cultural deviationists " in Hungary. While the " bourgeois lie " of so-called cultural freedom is denounced in the strongest terms, regret is expressed that even " progressive," *i.e.*, pro-Communist, writers have been influenced by the " bourgeois calumny " that *partiinost* somehow interferes with the writer's creative freedom. Even the Soviet literature of the twenties, which stood for a minimum of Party control, comes in for censure in this connection.

All this does not look very promising, nor is there much evidence of fresh creative stirrings in the spring numbers of the leading literary journals. Perhaps it is too early—these magazines have their contents planned months in advance. *Novy Mir* publishes instalments of a new industrial novel by Alexander Bek, who once wrote a good war novel, while *Oktyabr* has

instalments of an agricultural novel by Zakrutkin. *Znamya* carries the second part of Ehrenburg's *Thaw*, already mentioned above, and *Zvezda* has just begun the publication of a semi-historical novel on the revolutionary movement in Finland. None of these works is in any way remarkable, and Ehrenburg's novel in particular falls short even of the modest promise contained in its first volume. *Inostranaya Literatura* (*Foreign Literature*) publishes a critical study of Hemingway, which comes to the not very surprising conclusion that this writer's concern with death mirrors the death-pangs of Western culture. Dr. Arnold Kettle, of Leeds University, surveys the literary scene in his native Britain and takes the occasion to praise the *Daily Worker's* services to literature. Outside the reviews, Soviet literary criticism marks another step with the publication of Volume II of a new history of Soviet literature (1953–55), written in the old spirit and apparently concluded about a year ago—there are even some traces of the "cult of the individual."

More hopeful signs are not entirely lacking. Thus Boris Pasternak and Yuri Olesha, both in disfavour for many years, were mentioned among prominent writers on the occasion of Alexander Fadeyev's funeral; and some minor figures who disappeared from view after the 1946–49 purges have once more put in an appearance and are named among the participants in recent literary debates. The current political thaw ought to have emboldened the critics of authority, and it may be that these timid swallows do indeed herald a new spring; though on present evidence the ice-floes are still very thick. Still, if one is determined to look for signs of liberalisation, one may find one encouraging instance at least in the publication (in *Novy Mir*, May, 1956) of Bruno Jasienski's *Plot of the Indifferent*. Jasienski, a Polish author who wrote in French as well as Polish, found refuge in the Soviet Union during the early thirties and even enjoyed a brief spell of popularity before being swept away in the great purge of the later thirties. In the preface to his novel, his wife refers to his arrest and deportation as having been the work of "slanderers and provocateurs." This posthumous rehabilitation may conceivably point the way

to similar developments in the case of writers like Boris Pilnyak and others.

The most recent indications on the sector of the front dealing with Western literature are less encouraging. *Inostranaya Literatura,* which specialises in translations, has lately concentrated on Communist and pro-Communist authors to the exclusion of others. The May issue, which like its predecessors runs to over 250 pages, includes a questionnaire addressed to some two dozen writers on their present plans; with the exception of a very few (Alberto Moravia, Heinrich Böll, Erskine Caldwell), they are all Communists or fellow-travellers, the former being of the cultural-commissar type : they include Mao-dun and other proponents of Zhdanovism in Chinese Communist literature rather than talented writers who also happen to be Communists. This is a familiar development.

3

"MODERNISTS" v. "SOCIALIST REALISTS" IN MUSIC

IT IS widely, though erroneously, supposed outside the USSR that the Zhdanov ukase on musical composition, published in connection with the performance of Muradeli's opera *Great Friendship* in 1946, has somehow been revoked since Stalin's death. This is clearly a misconception, for the Party Central Committee's subsequent "historic resolution" of February 10, 1948, continues to supply the main guiding line for Soviet musicians. "It expressed the will of the people, its ideas, its spiritual interests." [1] The resolution has, however, been given a new interpretation, or rather, it is now permissible to criticise as "unduly narrow" the interpretation formerly placed on it. There were, it now appears, some misguided people who vulgarised the Party's profound ideas on the subject. The concept of realism was narrowed down, and composers were bidden to employ only themes which made an immediate popular appeal; while on the other hand excessive criticism was directed at valuable, though imperfect, works such as Prokofiev's opera *War and Peace,* Shostakovich's tenth symphony, Khachaturian's violin concerto, etc.

In the present, comparatively relaxed, atmosphere it has anyhow become possible for two cliques to form themselves and to be known respectively as "modernists" and "realists." Neither faction is happy about these labels, the modernists affirming their undying loyalty to "socialist realism," while the realists contend that they do not object to innovation. In fact, the modernists are cautiously trying to edge away from Zhdanovism, whereas the realists have on the whole remained faithful to it. The whole discussion is well wrapped in cotton-wool, for although the modernists appear to have some influence

[1] *Sovetskaya Musika,* 1956, No. 3, p. 4.

on the periodical *Sovetskaya Musika*, they can hardly afford to state plainly that they do not approve of "socialist realism" as officially understood. Their favourite critical gambit consists in drawing invidious comparisons between the current state of musical composition and the principles officially proclaimed in other fields of creative endeavour. Thus D. Zhitomirsky, a fairly well-known critic, was recently reported [2] to have compared the situation in music with that in architecture—taking advantage of the fact that the architects were recently criticised by Khrushchev himself for devoting too much attention to outward show. There was, he thought, a cult of *paradnost* in Soviet music, a hankering after loud and showy display, a tendency to stilted sentiment, which some critics continued to describe as "heroic, optimistic, and full-blooded."

The "realists" were not slow to hit back. Writing in *Sovetskaya Kultura*, April 17, 1956, Professor I. Rishkin complained that the modernists had systematically evaded a discussion of fundamentals and shown themselves unable to organise a free, creative debate, as a prelude to the second congress of Soviet composers scheduled for the summer of 1956.

The real argument directed against the modernists of *Sovetskaya Musika*, and repeatedly elaborated in *Sovetskaya Kultura*, is that they have in practice forsworn *narodnost*, *i.e.* the great Zhdanovist principle of keeping in step with popular taste. They are charged with applying musical criteria appropriate to the small number of connoisseurs and thus insensibly passing to the defence of "decadent" art. Even atonal music is said to have found some defenders! Various modernists had gone so far as to distinguish between popular and anti-popular elements in modern jazz, thereby infringing the doctrine of the struggle between the two cultural camps in the modern world. Others had glossed over the modernist aberrations committed by Prokofiev and Shostakovich. In this field, the modernists themselves have lately yielded ground. "It is impossible to forget that Shostakovich's work has a certain tendency to close in upon

[2] *Sovetskaya Musika*, 1956, No. 2, pp. 25 *et seq.*

itself, that the popular roots of his music are not deep enough, that his innovations lack a democratic spirit," etc.[3]

While thus being lectured for their occasional tendency to stray from the orthodox path, Soviet composers are also urged to produce more and better works, and to free themselves from the effects (now admitted) of dull levelling in the recent past. Thus they are up against the familiar quandary of the intellectual in the Soviet Union: the Party wants them to step up their output and even to make fresh discoveries—" socialist realism does not impose any limitations upon them in this field "[4]; but these discoveries must be guaranteed to have " popular roots," to be in conformity with the prevailing demand for simple and uncomplicated patterns, and to eschew the sin of " modernism." The dilemma is made more acute by the growth of cultural contacts with the West. While Moscow audiences are, for the sake of co-existence, currently being drenched with some rather inferior Western output, genuine cultural intercourse at a higher level is creating additional problems for Soviet composers who would like to escape from their previous isolation.

The extent of this officially-sponsored isolation remains considerable. Schoenberg, for example, remains taboo, and his views are attacked with monotonous regularity. On the other hand, the new liberalism has recently permitted one critic to use Hindemith's work as a stick with which to beat the unrepentant Schoenberg. To this writer,[5] Hindemith's present position " is very significant. His decisive rejection of the twelve-tone system, his defence of the basis of musical art which, in his own words, has an ethical content giving pleasure to people and ennobling their lives—bears witness to the struggle conducted by Western composers against the anti-humanist tendencies of reactionary formalism." Arthur Honegger and Alois Melichar are likewise cited with approval in this context.

Perhaps the main achievement of the " thaw " in the field of musical criticism is the revaluation of Western nineteenth- and early twentieth-century music. It is now admitted that

[3] *Sovetskaya Musika*, 1956, No. 3, p. 9.
[4] *Kommunist*, 1955, No. 18.
[5] *Sovetskaya Musika*, 1955, No. 12.

during the struggle against "cosmopolitanism" some Soviet authors "went to the other extreme and tended to blacken and denigrate the progressive features of Western European classicism, treating Russian classicism as though it had existed in complete isolation from foreign music." [6] Thus nineteenth-century Italian opera was treated with a lack of respect, Wagner was regarded as a destroyer of musical forms and a precursor of formalism, and Brahms was viewed as a soulless formalist, while later composers were uniformly rejected as products of the decay of bourgeois culture. This is no longer the approved view. It is, for example, currently held that "the national popular line of French music is continued in the best works of Debussy, Ravel, and Milhaud." [7]

On this issue there is a measure of agreement between "realists" and "formalists," though the former continue to be more reserved in their attitude to Western music. For the rest, most of the rigid prescriptions laid down in 1946–48 persist to the present day, and though they are now interpreted less narrowly they continue to circumscribe the field of action of Soviet music in a manner not substantially different from that of the Zhdanov period. Typically, the most recent turn in the discussion preceding the projected Soviet congress of musicians shows a pronounced reversion to old-style orthodoxy. Aram Khachaturian is now attacked for having suggested (in July, 1955) that after 1948 "the prevailing conditions did much harm to the development of the individuality of young composers and paralysed the creative ability of those belonging to the older generation." To *Sovetskaya Musika* [8] this is evidence that he "has lost all sense of reality." The article complains about what it describes as unhealthy tendencies in Soviet music during the past eighteen months, including a retreat from the former close and immediate concern with topicality. Yet another author, M. Sokolsky, protests against the tendency to hound the "formalists" on account of their past sins:

> There are two eternal categories: the eternal formalists, and the eternal hereditary and honorary realists. The formalists

[6] *Sovetskaya Musika*, 1956, No. 1.
[7] *Sovetskaya Musika*, 1956, No. 2, p. 130.
[8] 1956, No. 5.

> have to demonstrate anew each time that they are formalists no longer. The realists, on the other hand, are under no obligation to compose anything at all: they are credited with the patent of realism anyhow.

This implied criticism of musical officialdom links up with the case of Andrei Volkonsky, one of the most talented of the younger generation of Soviet composers, who grew up in France but returned to Moscow some years ago. Although " strongly influenced by formalist tendencies," he showed a genuine desire to reform; the Moscow Conservatory, however, decided to get rid of this " difficult student " (quotation marks in the original) and expelled him for some unstated " breach of discipline. . . ."

4

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON PAINTING

RUSSIAN music has on the whole kept a high standard and maintained its place in the world, notwithstanding the restrictions of which some samples have just been given. The state of affairs in the fields of painting and sculpture is very different; here the ravages of orthodoxy fell on soil that was none too highly cultivated, and the end of the Stalin era has not so far introduced any fresh impetus. It is significant that the respect with which the arts are usually treated in the USSR does not extend to painting, which has frequently been made the butt of satire in Soviet publications. It appears indeed to be tacitly acknowledged that Russia has not in this field produced any outstanding masterpieces, though for explicit admission of this fact the Soviet public had to wait until Ehrenburg, some months ago, conceded that Russian literature of the golden age had not found its equivalent in the field of pictorial art and sculpture. Yet the current state of affairs in Soviet art cannot be adequately accounted for in terms of national tradition alone. The question, after all, is not why there are no Russian Rembrandts, but why Soviet art, "standing on a pinnacle of progressive aspiration in our epoch," [1] has so far failed to come up even to the modest standards set by the high-priests of "socialist realism"—specifically, why the third-rate neo-classical works produced by Soviet painters have failed to gain any international recognition and are frequently treated with derision in the Soviet Union itself.

Both the artists and the professional critics have during the past few months given some signs of greater interest in this painful subject. From the official point of view, there is perhaps at the moment no special cause for concern; for whereas in the

[1] *Iskusstvo*, 1956, No. 2, p. 19.

past there was some criticism of artists for shutting themselves away in their studios and ignoring the world outside, " the past year or two (*i.e.* 1954–55) have been a turning point," according to *Iskusstvo*,[2] in that artists have come to grips with " the very centre of life." Translated into less vague terms, this means that there have been fewer portraits of individual " leaders," and more attempts to render everyday industrial and village scenes. But this is not exactly an original development, and the evidence available from Soviet journals and art exhibitions does not suggest any marked innovations. The official complacency is in fact not shared by the artists and critics themselves, judging from the discussions launched in connection with the forthcoming artists' congress this summer and, more important, the projected jubilee exhibition next year. The official line on the 1957 exhibition contains no surprises. It lays down that—

> the main attention of the participants . . . should be turned towards a profound and all-embracing projection of the nature of Soviet man, in the full many-sidedness of his work, his social and individual life in their indissoluble unity. The artists are called upon to create clear, typical patterns displaying the rich spiritual world of the Soviet people, of our contemporaries—the leading figures of the working class, innovators in production, toilers in Soviet agriculture, the Soviet intelligentsia—to display all their high ideological and moral qualities and their patriotic sentiments.[3]

This sounds familiar; and it has been followed by attacks on unnamed people who are trying to introduce dangerous new ideas into Soviet art, such as those critics who, in the name of encouraging creative individuality, preach " squalid, outdated, and exploded æsthetic concepts and formalistic prejudices," or who want to make an absurd issue out of the alleged underestimation of impressionism and other bourgeois fads in the recent past.[4]

So much for the voice of orthodoxy; but orthodoxy is no longer quite unchallenged. Some significant pointers emerged from the recent " creative discussions " in the Moscow centre of the Union of Soviet Artists on the theme " Tradition and

[2] 1955, No. 6.
[3] *Iskusstvo*, 1955, No. 5, editorial.
[4] *Iskusstvo*, 1956, No. 2.

Innovation." [5] The question which preoccupied the participants was perhaps most clearly indicated by A. Plastov, who complained that "we have a cliché for everything: themes, composition, and the putting of paint on canvas. This is all the more dangerous because for a good many of us clichés have become second nature." And he went on to ask the key question: "We should all like to know very much what is meant by innovation or by being a traditionalist; more precisely, how to be an innovator and to follow tradition, and what exactly one is to do to avoid being called an 'æsthete.'" There was, of course, no satisfactory reply to these and similar naïve inquiries.

It is by now an old story that "socialist realism" and its official interpreters justify themselves by referring to the public taste: the public wants great, beautiful, and optimistic pictures and sculptures, and it is the business of art to supply them. These certainties received a blow when an exhibition of sculpture by Erzy in Moscow was acclaimed by the public—though not by the critics. Erzy had spent most of his adult life outside the USSR and returned to his homeland only a few years ago. When his work was put on show, it turned out that his sculptures were not particularly "beautiful," in the accepted sense of the term; their proportions were not strictly realistic, the faces frequently expressed pain and other emotions foreign to the accepted code of "socialist realism," and yet the show was a tremendous success. In the words of one exasperated critic, "thousands of people—students, teachers, soldiers—went to the exhibition, wrote enthusiastic letters, placed flowers on the pedestals of the sculptures." [6] Plainly this was upsetting, because it failed to confirm the official view of popular taste. To the art critic of *Iskusstvo* this was one occasion when the public simply went wrong: "We have a great deal of respect for our art viewer, for what he aims at in art and likes . . . but one must not make the mistake of supposing that all viewers have already attained a full understanding of the peculiarities of art."

When addressing themselves to the vexed subject of Western

[5] Reported in *Iskusstvo*, 1956, No. 2, pp. 17 *et seq.*
[6] *Iskusstvo*, 1956, No. 2.

art, the official critics are able to breathe a little more freely. Some of the bolder spirits have been permitted to express the opinion that Soviet painters may have something to learn from the French impressionists—notwithstanding the latter's "errors"; and this view has now been grudgingly accepted, though with so many reservations as to make the concession almost valueless. Manet is regarded as tolerable—one of the last masters of European realism; he had his weaknesses; he didn't understand the social problems of his time, and his artistic clarity operates in a void; but on the whole he may pass. Monet is judged more harshly, on account of his passion for an abstract kind of optical vision. Something may be learned from Degas' gift of observation and Renoir's use of colour, but their general approach was all wrong. Cézanne is already beyond the pale—he introduces the "beginning of the end," *i.e.*, the path towards abstraction and formalism.

If the border-line between "genuine" and "decadent" art is indicated by the work of Cézanne, anything that comes later cannot hold much interest for the Soviet artist, and in fact even "progressive" foreigners rarely have their work reproduced in Soviet art magazines. One of the few exceptions recently was an exhibition of Mexican art dedicated largely to political themes. Even in such cases it is usually suggested that the artists in question are on their way to perceiving the true importance of "socialist realism."

Orthodoxy makes no secret of the fact that there has been no common ground with Western art since the last decade of the nineteenth century. Soviet composers and writers may perhaps learn a thing or two from Western contemporaries, but not artists :

> Let it be admitted frankly that the problem concerning the value of modern Western painting and sculpture and the utilisation of its experience is far more difficult than is the case with contemporary Western music and literature.[7]

It is not clear how far this attitude reflects that of the community of Soviet artists and critics, but so far it has clearly remained the dominant one in the official sphere.

[7] *Iskusstvo*, 1955, No. 6, editorial.

5

THE LITERARY SCENE IN AUTUMN 1956 *

CHAPTERS 5 and 6 of this book are wholly devoted to the subject of literature and literary criticism in the USSR, Chapter 5 dealing with recent trends in Soviet writing, while Chapter 6 is given over to a consideration of what still appears to be the orthodox attitude towards Western literature, as reflected in a new standard textbook. We begin with a brief résumé of the recent progress of de-Stalinisation in this field, and here it is necessary to observe that we are dealing with what can only be described as a subterranean process. So far as outward appearances go, there has been little change from the immediate past. Signs of liberalisation are not altogether lacking, but neither are they currently being advertised as such.

Some lag in translating into literary practice the directives of the XXth Party Congress in February, 1956, was to be expected. So far as literature and the arts were concerned, the general line was laid down during the months of April and May, and thereafter an interval for adaptation was obviously required. In Chapters 1 to 4 attention is directed to the narrow limits still imposed upon Soviet writers and artists, the purely formal manner in which the Stalin cult has been condemned, and the accompanying warnings addressed to "politically immature writers displaying unhealthy tendencies" (*i.e.* people who showed a tendency to take the new freedom seriously). Three months later there is still no good reason for revising this first judgment. Nonetheless there *has* been a change, and it is the purpose of our present issue to establish a little more clearly what exactly de-Stalinisation means at present, and how far it is reflected in the treatment accorded to native and foreign authors.

* Chaps. 5 and 6 first appeared in *Soviet Survey*, 1956, No. 9.

The outstanding event of the immediate past is the posthumous rehabilitation of something like half the Soviet authors "purged" during the thirties and forties. As compared with the period after Stalin's death, but before the XXth Congress, the change lies in the fact that this process is no longer confined to writers who had merely fallen into disfavour with the authorities, but has now been extended to people who were actually liquidated as "enemies of the people." There are some clearly discernible groups of such purge victims, the most widely reported but, from a literary viewpoint, least significant cases being those of the Jewish writers executed (according to Polish Communist sources) in 1952, apparently on direct orders from Stalin. Poems by Itsik Pfeffer, Perets Markish, and other victims of this particular purge have once again made their appearance in various literary magazines, and there has also been some relaxation in the ban imposed upon the Yiddish language, *e.g.* the publication of a literary almanac in Yiddish has been announced for the current month.

Of greater literary interest is the rehabilitation of Isaac Babel, one of the leading novelists and short-story writers of the early post-revolutionary period, who disappeared in 1937 after falling into official disfavour about a decade earlier. Two other notable cases are those of Vladimir Kirshon and Sergei Tretyakov, both executed as "Trotskyist spies" at about the same period. It is now officially stated that they had been wrongfully accused, and special commissions have been appointed to administer their literary heritage. On the other hand, the process of restoring the literary reputations of dead "Trotskyists" has not so far been extended to other purge victims, such as Tarasov Rodionov, Ivan Kataev, or the Pereval group; nor has there been any mention so far of such notable non-political victims as Prince Mirsky, Boris Pilnyak, or the literary victims of earlier pre-Stalinist (and less sanguinary) purges during the twenties. There seems to be some uncertainty over the criteria proper to each individual case, and perhaps some reluctance to rehabilitate writers who were genuinely involved with some opposition group, and not merely liquidated by accident.

The process of rehabilitation takes various forms. In some cases the Writers' Union has appointed a commission to go into the matter; in others, the standard literary textbooks are suddenly under fire for omitting certain names. In a few instances, *e.g.* the official treatment of the Soviet satirists Ilf and Petrov, it is now good form to poke fun at the existing official literary histories. Thus the *Soviet Encyclopedia's* treatment of these two humorists, who were deservedly popular during the twenties and early thirties, is the subject of ironic comment in *Zvezda.*[1] Although the two writers were close collaborators, they received quite different treatment in Volumes 17 and 32 of the *Encyclopedia,* published respectively in 1952 and 1955, the difference being plainly accounted for by the spread of the "thaw" during the interval consumed by the editors' alphabetical progress from letter I to letter P. This kind of politico-literary opportunism can now be safely mocked. In other cases it is enough for a writer to receive favourable mention in one of the approved literary journals. Thus when Ehrenburg recently alluded to Marina Tsvetaeva, a well-known poetess who returned to Moscow from her Paris exile in the late thirties, committed suicide in 1941, and has lain under a complete ban ever since, this was promptly treated as a sign that she was no longer beyond the pale.

Now and then the literary authorities, faced with this resurrection of the literary dead, have found occasion to warn against undue praise being accorded to purge victims. One such case concerns the famous theatrical producer Vsevolod Meyerhold, another of Stalin's victims who disappeared around 1938. "He is now fully rehabilitated and has been posthumously reinstated as a Party member, since it has been established that he was tried on false, calumnious charges."[2] This, however, does not mean, we are informed, that all his activities are now thought to have been without blemish. It appears that he was a highly complex personality, subject to decadent bourgeois influences, and towards the end of his career marked by disappointment, owing to failures which he might perhaps have overcome had he

[1] 1956, No. 7, p. 190.
[2] *Teatr,* 1956, No. 7, p. 55, editorial.

lived. . . . The article emphasises the need to clear up these contradictions: "This is a very topical matter, since following Meyerhold's rehabilitation some comrades have displayed a mistakenly uncritical attitude towards him and clearly exaggerated his rôle in the development of the Soviet theatre, while seeking to overlook his serious ideological and æsthetic weaknesses as a producer." The editorial nonetheless goes on to rehabilitate two other leading figures of the Soviet stage, Alexander Tairov and Vakhtangov, both in disfavour for many years. Tairov, we are now told, was another of those distressingly complex characters, and, in particular, he failed to rid himself altogether of harmful, formalistic tendencies. He is nevertheless stated to have played an honourable part, and it is now in order to describe him as a good citizen and to rebut the charge that he was a representative of bourgeois art who never did anything for the Soviet theatre.

Certain contemporary Western writers likewise appear to benefit from this readiness to admit past mistakes. Thus Mrs. T. Motileva, previously distinguished for her zeal in denouncing those who had strayed, devotes an article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*[3] to a qualified apology for some of her own past sins: "At one time it was the custom among ourselves to depict the entire literature of the capitalist world as a single grey mass of decadence and disintegration. But those who wrote in this fashion (including the present writer) were mainly interested in the work of authors who were close to us from an ideological viewpoint. Anything that could not be classified as 'progressive' or 'decadent' (both interpreted very narrowly) remained outside our field of vision." It was then gradually realised (we learn from Mrs. Motileva) that the "critical realism" of the West was neither an isolated phenomenon nor a relic of the past, but one of the main trends in twentieth-century Western literature. Hence a variation upon an old theme: "Thomas Mann's novel *The Magic Mountain* is a work which closely approaches the literature of decadence. It undeniably represents a certain poetisation of malady and death. But the principal feature of this novel, after all, is not the irrational pathos, the

[3] August 25, 1956.

mysticism of death, but the author's profound and sober irony. With the aid of this irony, Mann succeeds in raising himself above the level of his confused and misguided heroes."

Some other, second-rate, German writers also benefit from the new liberalism, among them Bernhard Kellerman, Emil Ludwig, and even Hans Fallada, who did not play a particularly heroic part during the Hitler era, although as a novelist he is ranked high by some German critics. The space allotted to Ludwig's mediocre essay on Rembrandt [4] may be symptomatic of a new tolerance for Western liberals. It would be more significant if there were a commensurate interest in the first-rate.

Boris Slutski is a young [5] Soviet poet whose first writings were published during and after the war. His " formalist " style was soon considered unorthodox, and silence developed about his work. Between 1947 and 1955 he does not seem to have published anything, and it therefore came as a minor surprise when in recent months he cropped up again, *e.g.* in *Zvezda,* July, 1956. Although a decided opponent of " socialist realism," he has recently been extolled by no less a critic than Ehrenburg as one of the leading poets of this generation and a worthy successor of Akhmatova, Pasternak, and Tsvetaeva—all of them " formalists " and consequently under a ban during the Zhdanov era.

Slutski has thus become the centre of a literary dispute with ideological overtones. A critic in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* has complained about certain regrettable features of his work, *e.g.*, a tendency to emphasise his own individuality. He is quoted as saying in one of his poems: " I did not turn my back on the people with whom I starved and was humiliated . . . you do not remember how they offended us. I could remember, but I do not. Only a little perhaps . . . not to flatter the people, not to cringe before it. I am part of it. It is bigger than I . . . but not superior." He also speaks of the " deadly tiredness of the people." All this is offensive to the critics of the orthodox school. It suggests both " formalism " and " cosmopolitanism," and the general complaint against him is that his attitude strikes

[4] Novy Mir, 1956, 7.
[5] Born 1919

a note of *hauteur* which makes his poetry read like a translation from a foreign tongue. It is worth noting, however, that Ehrenburg has not been alone in drawing attention to Slutski and defending him against his critics. At a recent session of the Academy of Sciences one of the speakers, reviewing the main developments in Soviet literature during the past year, described Slutski as an " intelligent, analytical mind who stresses accuracy, consistency in the development of ideas, clarity of perception. If one adds to this a supple, freely developing, and . . . sharply accentuated rhythm . . . one gets a fairly clear picture of this outstanding poet " (*Izvestia Akademii Nauk*, 1956 vol. 15, 3, p. 281).

Among the subjects which have recently come in for some plain speaking in the leading literary journals, few are more significant than the hollow pathos common in Soviet educational establishments, notably where ideological matters are concerned. In *Novy Mir*, 1956, 7, L. Eizerman, a teacher in a Moscow school, by way of illustration quotes from school essays on Ostrovksy's *Storm*, a nineteenth-century play. Some typical passages excerpted by him include the standard Soviet clichés, *e.g.*, " sensing the coming doom of the kingdom of darkness, and the emergence of a new society in which there would be neither exploiters nor exploited," etc. Eizerman suggests that these hackneyed interpolations are deliberately inserted by the essay writers with a view to gaining the favour of teachers and examiners.

He is also worried by the apparent lack of genuine political interest. " On the eve of May Day, the ninth-form pupils asked me whether they might skip the formal part of the celebrations and attend only the concert and dance. ' Why don't you want to listen to the speech? Don't you think it might be of some help to you? ' ' But we know it all by heart.' ' What do you think he is going to tell you? ' ' Well, first of all he is going to explain why we celebrate May Day, and then how this holiday emerged, and how they celebrated May Day in Tsarist Russia, and so on.' " The author regretfully concludes that his pupils were not altogether wrong in their critical estimate of the day's solemnities. It is his impression that the official style has become

a subject of "naughty mockery," and that it tends to bore, and even nauseate, young people. The remedy suggested is to liven it up and work out more attractive forms of celebrating communal holidays, such as inviting children from other (Communist) countries.

The glorification of Russian national heroes was one of the minor by-products of the later Stalin era, the principal protagonist of the school being the late Alexei Tolstoy, an accomplished cynic whose historico-novelistic portrayals of Peter the Great and Ivan the Terrible were thinly camouflaged panegyrics on Stalin. Of late, these and similar writings have found a more critical audience among the literati, and some reviewers now blame themselves for not having earlier drawn attention to their manifest faults and weaknesses.

Writing in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* [6] G. Lenobl describes Alexei Tolstoy's writings on the subject of Ivan the Terrible as brilliant, but nonetheless adds that to read them now is to experience some bitterness and hurt. These mixed feelings are said to arise from the attempt to make the Tsar appear a "progressive" whose bloody purges of the old Russian nobility were historically justified. At the same time, the now dominant "objective and critical" viewpoint still allows for a correct understanding of the importance of what the Tsar was trying to do (though not apparently of what Alexei Tolstoy was doing to escape being liquidated). The new viewpoint is described as a happy synthesis transcending the original un-historical "thesis" of the early post-revolutionary years, when Russia's past was condemned wholesale, and the subsequent Stalinist reaction when the nationalist antithesis led to uncritical glorification of even the worst Tsars. Konstantin Shildkret, the author of a new historical novel about sixteenth-century Russia, is singled out for praise. Having published a highly critical work on the same subject some thirty years ago, he has recently returned to his old theme, in a manner "synthetic" enough to suit the new taste: neither the Tsar nor anyone else is a hero. "This alone appears significant. For many years our historical novels have been filled with ruling-class

[6] July 14, 1956.

heroes." A similar pattern seems about to emerge in the treatment of other Russian national figures.

A number of regional meetings of Soviet writers have taken place since the XXth Party Congress last February. Although press reports on their discussions have been relatively brief, it would appear that there has been some plain speaking—too much perhaps for fuller publicity to be quite safe. Criticism of Party interference in literary work came from authors whose subservience to the literary bureaucracy had seemed complete in the past. One such surprise was provided by the appearance, at a Moscow regional meeting last July, of Alexander Bek, an author of the Stalin era who has now come out with a demand for giving writers, rather than appointed officials, the right to determine what is to be published in the USSR. He went so far as to describe the present state of affairs as "intolerable" and to demand its replacement by a form of voluntary censorship exercised by the writers themselves. Bureaucratic censorship had turned into a "grave malady not easily cured." As an instance he cited the continued suppression of some of Pasternak's work.

It emerges from these discussions that even Gorki has on occasions been censored. It is not, for example, known to any but a few specialists in the USSR that Gorki was hostile to the Bolshevik *coup d'état* in 1917, and stood in opposition to the régime for years afterwards. To this day these facts are not publicly stated, and critics who wish to mention the forbidden subject are obliged to use roundabout language when referring, as they are beginning to do, to the suppression of "important documents bearing on the relations between Gorki and Lenin." Some of Gorki's writings on anti-semitism and the Jewish question, it now turns out, were also suppressed during the Stalin era—a fact which is currently admitted, the admission being perhaps a sign of impending changes in this respect.

The recent literary discussions in the East European satellites, notably in Poland and Hungary, have naturally attracted considerable interest among Soviet writers. The official reaction so far is confined to an article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*[7] dealing

[7] August 14, 1956.

with a meeting of the Soviet Academy of Sciences at which reports on these debates were communicated. The Polish writers A. Slonimsky and Jan Kot, the Czech J. Seifert, and the Rumanian A. Jar are singled out for criticism on account of their polemical attitude towards "Socialist realism" and their tendency to undervalue the literary achievements of their particular régimes. A Polish writer is rebuked for having suggested that European poetry has undergone an important evolution during the past half-century, and that only the participants in this change (*e.g.*, Mayakovsky, Aragon) are entitled to the honour of being regarded as suitably up to date.

Russian literary output in 1955 was the subject of a number of reports and discussions at a meeting of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.[8] The majority of speakers on this occasion agreed that Soviet essayists had produced some notable work during the period under review. Other literary contributions were described as "not above average." The old complaint that "Soviet man" is not being adequately portrayed was once more voiced. For the playwrights, 1955 was clearly a mediocre year, judging from the reports on their activities. The poets fared somewhat better, two names mentioned being Dolmatovski and Sayanov. There was praise for Mikhail Sholokhov's new work, *viz.*, the publication of some chapters from the long-delayed second part of his novel, *Virgin Soil Upturned*, which he seems to have kept in a drawer during the later Stalinist era. Literary criticism is said to have made some progress since the 1954 writers' congress drew attention to its weakness, but satire and theatrical comedy still "suffer from anæmia and preoccupation with trivialities."

An interesting new feature is the appearance of a larger number of translations from non-Russian authors, including West Europeans who cannot be styled "progressive." In some cases the accompanying prefatory notes are ludicrous enough, but the long-range effect of such publications may be considerable. This consideration introduces some subjects which are grouped together in the second part of this survey.

[8] *Cf. Izvestiya Akademii Nauk*, 1956, vol. 15, 3.

6

A SOVIET PANORAMA OF WESTERN LITERATURE

VISITORS to the USSR during the past few months have remarked upon the interest shown by educated Soviet citizens in cultural, and especially literary, developments abroad. There has in consequence been some discussion of the extent to which the Soviet reading public was effectively cut off from Western intellectual currents during the post-war period, and speculation is now rife about the degree of liberalisation introduced in more recent years. It may therefore seem appropriate to devote some space to the present Russian attitude towards non-Soviet literature.

In doing so one must, of course, distinguish between official pronouncements and their presumptive effect upon students and other readers. It is no secret to anyone who has recently visited the USSR, or talked with Soviet citizens, that, even at the height of the anti-Western drive, European and American writers exercised considerable influence upon the Soviet public, at any rate in the sense that there was continued interest in their work. Since the "thaw" began to make itself felt, this influence has markedly increased. At the same time the official attitude, though slightly more liberal and less hostile in tone, has not greatly changed. In the circumstances, an event such as the recent exhibition of French books in Moscow, in connection with the visit of MM. Mollet and Pineau, cannot have failed to set up certain tensions in the minds of those privileged to attend. Their number presumably was not large, but must have included a sizeable proportion of the capital's intelligentsia.

Similar occasions will doubtless present themselves in future, and in all such cases it will be interesting to see what Soviet intellectuals make of Western authors hitherto known to them only through the distorting prism of the official ideology. To establish the nature of such informal reactions will take time.

Meanwhile, one is thrown back on the not very exhilarating task of studying the kind of official literary criticism that is currently being produced for the benefit of Soviet university students attending liberal arts courses—not a very imposing fraction of the total university population, but nonetheless an important segment, since it must inevitably include the majority of those who specialise in foreign languages and are destined to have some sort of contact with other cultures, be it only as secondary school teachers.

For the purpose of such an analysis one can do no better than turn to the massive textbook recently published by Moscow University under the title *Kurs Lektsii po Istorii Zarubezhnykh Literatur 20ogo Veka*, vol. I.[1] The period under review extends from 1871 to 1919; subsequent developments will be dealt with in a companion volume.

The first point to be noted is the unimpeachable orthodoxy of manner and tone which distinguishes this learned production. Every chapter opens with a review of economic conditions in the area under inspection, and closes with appropriate quotations from Lenin, Stalin, and the leaders of the respective Communist parties concerned, not excluding Pieck and Thorez. More than a third of the total space is allotted to the literatures of Eastern Europe; Poland and Czechoslovakia (*i.e.*, the regions later included in the latter) each occupy more space than Germany, while the combined chapters on Bulgarian and Rumanian literature exceed in length those devoted to England and America. The post-1944 political development in Eastern Europe thus becomes the measuring-rod for assessing the value of pre-1919 literary output in these areas, unless the motivation is Pan-Slav sentimentality. Altogether some 350 pages out of 885 are given over to these exercises in political or racial piety, while Western literature is allotted about 520 pages, an arrangement which even non-Westerners may regard as somewhat lop-sided.

There is likewise a marked discrepancy in the treatment accorded to individual writers. Thus some Polish, Czech, and Bulgarian authors of uncertain international standing (Boleslav Prus, Svatopelk Czech, Ivan Vasov) are allowed more space

[1] Moscow, 1956, 885 pp.

than even the most " progressive " Western authors. On the other hand, Jack London has some twenty pages devoted to him (so has Frank Norris), while Henry James must be content with *twelve lines*. Galsworthy and Hardy do very well, with twenty-five pages each, whereas Yeats is dismissed in five lines, and Meredith, Stevenson, Conrad, and Arnold Bennett are each summed up in about ten lines before being consigned to oblivion. Meredith's fate seems particularly hard, seeing that he has recently been assigned a special place in the Communist Valhalla by no less a person than Mr. Jack Lindsay, the arch-priest of Marxist literary criticism in Great Britain. Perhaps the news has not yet reached Moscow, and the mistake will be made good in a subsequent edition. Meredith, be it noted for the benefit of the Moscow University pundits, has definitely been " placed " by Mr. Lindsay as a long-forgotten radical critic of the social order. Among the major French novelists, Romain Rolland predictably comes out on top with more than twenty pages of friendly criticism, while Gide and Proust are more severely dealt with: they are dismissed with six to eight *lines* each.

The treatment accorded to Western literature in general throughout the period under review is not distinguished by originality. The standard of criticism applied throughout is a familiar one: the " disintegration of bourgeois society ":

> Decadence in literature results from the disintegration of the bourgeoisie as a class in the imperialist epoch. . . . It should be noted that æstheticist " pure art " and aggressive racialist literature constitute a unity within the context of the most reactionary, imperialist, decadent ideology.[2]

Not that the naturalist writers fare any better. Where a representative of naturalism (Ibsen, Zola, Hauptmann, Norris) is admitted to the Soviet pantheon, this is done in the name of " realism," of which the author in question is retrospectively declared to have been a champion. Naturalism as such is rejected, as is impressionism, another " decadent " tendency. " The impressionist portraiture disfigures the human countenance " (p. 20). This judgment holds good for the Goncourts,

[2] *Op. cit.* p. 17.

Wilde, Schnitzler, and Knut Hamsun—an odd collection. As for symbolism and "formalism," the authors of the *Kurs* make it clear that they are not prepared to have any truck with those Western "progressives" who, to the annoyance of the Soviet authorities, have occasionally suggested that important technical innovations were introduced by these schools. Such assertions are treated as evidence that even progressive Western intellectuals tend to be politically naïve, and that some of them have to this day not outgrown certain anarchist or pseudo-revolutionary attitudes (p. 22). It is conceded that some Communist writers (Mayakovsky, Aragon) began as "formalists," but they are stated to have evolved beyond these youthful aberrations. Intrinsically, formalism is identified as anarchist, petty bourgeois, and politically harmful.

It is hardly necessary to stress that all this is straight Zhdanovism, in line with the ideological orthodoxy of 1946–48, when the official canon laid it down that "realism" alone was compatible with Communism. This, however, is taken to refer to general attitudes rather than particular cases. So far as individual authors are concerned, the decisive criterion is their attitude towards the Soviet Union. Projecting a little into the post-1919 period, which will be covered in the second volume, one may safely guess that if Upton Sinclair had stopped writing around 1925, when he was still enamoured with the Russian Revolution, he would qualify for treatment equivalent to that accorded to Jack London in the volume under review. Conversely, the fact that Gide is a good deal more "realistic" as a writer than Rolland has not saved him from the literary death sentence pronounced upon him by the Soviet critics since his disillusioned return from the USSR in 1936. The icy brevity with which his considerable pre-1919 output is treated in the new Moscow textbook is eloquent of the literary valuation currently placed in the Soviet Union upon writers who fail to come up to the political standards of Stalinism and post-Stalinism.

To come to a few specific examples, the authors take a dim view of the Goncourts whose "democratism is very deceptive." Mallarmé, Verlaine, and the symbolists generally, are dismissed

in a few lines. Rimbaud is shown a little more sympathy: he was, it appears, a gifted poet placed by circumstances in a tragic position. Unfortunately, " Rimbaud's poetry destroys itself, takes leave of reason, borders on gibberish." Gide and others fall under the accusation of " cosmopolitan liberalism," but their nationalist opponents fare no better: " The fact that apologists of nationalism like Barrès and Maurras took a critical view of these writers does not serve to conceal the extent to which they resemble each other: cosmopolitanism and nationalism are but two different aspects of the same imperialistic ideology." Writers in this category include André Gide (1869–1951), " who preached extreme individualism, the Nietzschean doctrine of the superman's right to commit crimes for the sake of relishing the ' fruits of the earth ' and experiencing the full development of one's personality. Gide was one of the founders of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, a coterie of esoteric æsthetes and cosmopolitans. Subsequently, he turned into an open apologist of imperialism and vilified the Soviet Union. Marcel Proust wrote his *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* in the spirit of Bergsonism. It is founded on an endless reconstruction of the flow of consciousness. This very lengthy novel enables Proust to undertake a minute description of the aristocracy whom he idealises, and to offer praise of stagnation and conservatism. The disintegration of art by way of subjectivism is likewise reflected in the work of Jules Romains. . . . To the realistic description of the psychology of social groups and classes he opposes the sub-conscious, mystic, biological union of people. Later he became a traitor and collaborated with the Hitlerites. . . ." [3]

Having thus disposed of a large part of modern French literature, the authors turn with relief to the few " realists " whom they are able to discern. For a start, there is the literature of the Paris Commune of 1871 (mainly Eugene Pottier, who supplied the text of the *International*). Next, it proves possible to applaud Maupassant (a process initiated by Gorki), since he was a realist, although " incapable of linking the cause of the French people to the future of France and his own fate as a writer. His realism was distorted by decadent trends in art,"

[3] p. 55.

a fact particularly noticeable in his later work. Nonetheless, " progressive public opinion in France combats the falsification of his heritage." [4] Zola's importance has been similarly distorted,[5] the realistic character of his work and his own democratic leanings having been concealed by bourgeois literary historians who falsely paint him as a naturalist. The *Kurs*, however, also registers his weaknesses: dependence on the bourgeois viewpoint, indifference to politics, and naturalist deviations, as well as " anti-humanist tendencies " in his literary work.

" The reactionary critics have distorted, and continue to distort with great zest the significance of Anatole France's work. They have tried to discredit this passionate enemy of the bourgeoisie, described him as a man without opinions, an egotist, contrasted France the artist with France the political writer. They treat his early work as important and his later writings as insignificant." [6] The *Kurs*, on the other hand, is intent on setting the record straight: it was his conversion, late in life, to sympathy with the Russian Revolution that is the really significant thing about him. On the other hand, there is the awkward fact that his work cannot really be held up as a model to students of " socialist realism," being neither realistic nor socialist—a circumstance inadequately concealed by the praise showered on Anatole France (and here quoted) by French Communist leaders, from Maurice Thorez to Georges Cogniot of *L'Humanité*. The authors are likewise obliged to note that even in his later work, *e.g.*, in *Les Dieux ont Soif* (1912) and *La Révolte des Anges* (1914), he displays a thoroughly anti-revolutionary scepticism, and that moreover he supported the 1914–18 war. " A new epoch in France's work opened with the October Revolution," according to the textbook, but unfortunately he wrote no further novels, thus furnishing no definite evidence for his Soviet admirers, who have to content themselves with his rather vague condemnation of the repression following the Paris Commune, and his Dreyfusard activities—hardly an issue of importance to Communists.

[4] p. 121.
[5] p. 159.
[6] p. 184.

Romain Rolland's literary activity during the greater part of his career as a writer likewise provides a stumbling-block. He did indeed oppose the official line during the 1914–18 war, but he did so from a pacifist, *i.e.*, bourgeois standpoint, instead of adopting "revolutionary defeatism." And although Thorez is once more quoted as stating that *Jean Christophe* furnished his chief consolation while in prison, the authors have considerable difficulty with the "idealist" and "subjectivist" character of Rolland's work. What attracts them is his critique of bourgeois society (hardly visible to his own countrymen), but more especially his dislike of, in the Soviet idiom, "rootless cosmopolitanism," *i.e.*, modernism, in art and literature. His treatment of Lucien Levy-Cœur, the rootless cosmopolitan, in *Jean Christophe*, is singled out for praise. (On this as on other occasions, *e.g.*, in their attitude towards the strongly anti-modernist Nordau, the authors betray the antisemitic bias noticeable from the start of the anti-cosmopolitan drive.) Rolland is described as having found himself in an ideological impasse until rescued by Gorki years later: an individualist tone predominated in his work, he tended to place his faith in superior personalities, and altogether showed reluctance to break with bourgeois values. "The victory of Jean Christophe, a victory won by the hero in the realm of the spirit, is a mere illusion, a victory which in fact was a defeat."[7] Fortunately for Rolland, Gorki was able subsequently to explain all this to him.

The section on English literature during the period under review opens, in the approved manner, with an introductory survey of social and political life. This gives the authors a chance to show that they are well up in the standard orthodoxies. Hyndman, the founder of British Social-Democracy, is dismissed as "a business man who wished to found a political career on the labour movement and pretended to be a friend of the workers." The period saw the growth of the Salvation Army, "a reactionary, religious-philanthropic organisation enjoying the support of finance capital." The Fabians, a small and quarrelling sect, were united only by fear of the growing importance of the workers' movement. "These attempts to capture its leadership

[7] p. 199.

were made because the trade unions had grown so much, notwithstanding the treacherous activities of their leaders."

The literary scene on the whole turns out to have been pretty dismal, but the authors take comfort from the activities of William Morris (despite his "lower-middle-class prejudices"), Samuel Butler, and H. G. Wells, all three of whom made important contributions to the "unmasking of bourgeois society." The "decadent" trend had its representative in W. B. Yeats ("his group in effect became a school within English bourgeois-decadent writing, with Irish bourgeois-nationalist features"), who is sharply contrasted with the "progressive" Synge. Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes, occupies a good deal more space than Yeats, but in the end is not awarded a certificate of merit—his stories place too much stress on the "pathology of crime." (This is somewhat surprising, for Doyle is highly popular in the USSR—probably more so than in England.) Oscar Wilde, the arch-decadent, comes in for the inevitable rebuke, although his ambivalent attitude towards bourgeois society is noted. Kipling, of course, finds no mercy: he not merely extolled British imperialism in general, and the British army in particular ("going so far as to glorify its espionage service"), but also dealt in demagogy of a particularly reprehensible type, in addition to being anti-humanist in principle. "Kipling's fondness for children's literature should be stressed. Here his imperialist ideology is somewhat better concealed, but still quite noticeable. It was the basis of the cruel, inhuman morality in which Kipling wished to see the younger generation brought up." The only trouble is that Kipling's writings are popular with Soviet readers; the authors note, however, that Russian translations of his work have been thoroughly purged of anti-humanist tendencies.

Joseph Conrad and R. L. Stevenson (ten lines each) had talent, but otherwise no great merit is discernible in their work, which on the whole is stated to be inferior to that of Mrs. Ethel Voynich (eight pages). Mrs. Voynich (b. 1864), the British wife of a Polish revolutionary, resides in the United States and is the author of an historical novel on the Italian Risorgimento, *The Gadfly*, long one of the most widely circulated books in the Soviet

Union, where she ranks as one of the three or four outstanding Anglo-American writers of the present century. Of late there has been something like a Voynich renaissance, and Soviet journalists touring the United States have reported at great length on their meetings with the old lady, who for some reason has failed to win due recognition in the West—undeservedly perhaps.

Apart from Mrs. Voynich, only three British writers have an entire section to themselves: Hardy, Galsworthy, and Shaw. The former, in his major work, is stated to have painted a true picture of the tragic position of the English people under capitalism. Praise is given to his opposition to the Boer war and, although it is noted with regret that he failed to understand the labour movement, he is described (on the authority of Gorki and Lunacharski) as an honest writer.

Galsworthy is regarded in the Soviet Union as perhaps the outstanding British novelist of the twentieth century, in view of his great " social " novels describing the life and manners of the British bourgeoisie in the imperialist epoch. His earlier writings (until 1910) are particularly recommended, whereas his later work is said to display bourgeois-apologetic tendencies. " In the late twenties, with the growth of economic and political crises, reactionary tendencies get the upper hand and kill the realist in Galsworthy." G. B. Shaw's work is divided into two periods, the year 1917 providing the watershed. It is noted to his credit that he never tried to hide in an ivory tower, and never failed to unmask the parasitic tendencies of bourgeois society, as well as its hypocritical morality. Praise is also given to his attitude towards the Soviet Union (his laudatory references to Mussolini being wisely ignored). His political attitude was, however, affected by petty-bourgeois reformist illusions. The paradox of Shaw's uneven creativity is discussed in terms of the general artistic decline characteristic of bourgeois art during the period. His chief weakness is seen in his failure to draw truly popular figures, a failure contrasted with the achievements of the Russian realists. His working-class characters (Doolittle in *Pygmalion*, the unemployed in *Major Barbara*) are dismissed as unconvincing.

The section devoted to German literature is fairly brief and cursory, perhaps not altogether without justification, since the period under review was not on the whole a very brilliant one in the history of German letters. The naturalists are disposed of in a few lines. Nietzsche comes in for the severe treatment to be expected (" sworn enemy of all democratic forces, decadent to the bone, pessimist, misanthrope "). He is credited, *inter alia*, with helping to pave the way for Hitler, and blamed additionally for exercising a nefarious influence over otherwise estimable writers, such as Thomas Mann, who for years were unable to liberate themselves from the harmful effect of imbibing his teachings in their youth. Theodor Fontane, Gerhard Hauptmann, and Wilhelm Polenz (the last named being little known in Germany, whatever his current standing in Russia) are mentioned among leading exponents of the " progressive " trend. The Mann brothers, Thomas and Heinrich, are stated to have brought realism to its fullest flowering, but in the present volume Heinrich Mann alone is allotted a special chapter, and praised (not indeed without good cause) for showing the kind of political and social insight then rare in Germany, and certainly not displayed by his brother Thomas. The fact is that the two men were then at opposite poles in their respective intellectual development, a circumstance blurred for the reader of Soviet textbooks by the cordial valuation placed in the USSR upon Thomas Mann's later political utterances. His earlier work is now said to have been distinguished by a sharp insight into the abnormal position of the artist in bourgeois society, but unfortunately the representative artists in his writings are all sick, abnormal people, " outsiders," not rebels against the social order. For the present-day Soviet critic, this aspect of Mann's early work is clearly blameworthy. The *jeunesse dorée* of Soviet society may conceivably take a different view, since from all accounts it is beginning to display an interest in " decadent " individualism. Meanwhile the official philistinism comes out very clearly in the manner in which such stirrings are censured in approved textbooks such as the one under review: any tendency to set up the artist in opposition to society is *ipso facto* treated as an unhealthy symptom, even where it is conceded that in relation to bourgeois

(but of course not Soviet) reality, there may have been some excuse for it.

American literature is analysed in terms of the conflict between writers who opposed the nascent imperialism of the United States, and those who failed to discern in those early symptoms the beginning of a period destined to witness the full flowering of imperialist decadence. As the nineteenth century draws to its close, reactionary, racialist, aggressive, and mystical tendencies are seen to gain the upper hand over progressive and democratic trends. Henry James (1843–1916) ranks as the arch-decadent, being at once a rootless cosmopolitan, an aesthete, and a believer in the noxious doctrine of *l'art pour l'art*. Despising the people, he determined early on to write for the élite, and even evolved a special style remote from popular understanding. Not surprisingly, having thus started on the wrong foot, he gradually came to concern himself more and more with psychological refinements, erotic problems, and the distasteful subject of death. A brief survey of the work of other writers of the period, *e.g.* Ambrose Bierce, Stephen Crane, and O. Henry, leads us to the conclusion that circumstances were not propitious to the flowering of progressive tendencies, a fact blamed among others upon the " reactionary " philosophy preached by the pragmatist school.

Four writers are singled out for more substantial treatment : Mark Twain, Frank Norris, Jack London, and Theodore Dreiser. A " merciless critic of imperialist America," Mark Twain, despite his pessimism with regard to mankind's future,[8] nonetheless managed in his best essays and short stories to convey something of the true spirit of the people. For this reason " the bourgeoisie is afraid of Twain, the enemy of reaction. It tries to neutralise the force of his angry satires by hushing them up, falsifying the text, or withholding his works from the public libraries." [9] Norris was given the same treatment by the professors of American literature. Although he wrote clumsily and " did not call upon the masses to fight for their rights," he performed work of value which even today " serves the cause of the struggle

[8] p. 460.
[9] p. 467.

against reaction and the fight for peace." Jack London, the chief of American realists, has had to face a wholesale campaign of suppression or distortion. It is conceded that he wrote too many potboilers and that even his best work betrays some bourgeois influence. His materialism was of the vulgar kind, and he underrated the creative rôle of the masses. Moreover, he never understood Marxism. "These weaknesses are not fortuitous. In his work, as well as in the writings of Norris and the early Dreiser, the ideological weakness of the American working-class finds its expression." [10] London is, however, praised for his dislike of bourgeois society, Lenin and the American Communist leader, Mr. William Z. Foster, being cited as witnesses to this effect.

Dreiser ("the greatest American writer of the twentieth century") is criticised for the element of "biologism and evolutionism" in his work. His chief merit, apart from his uncompromising realism, lies in his determined opposition to the ideologists of "American imperialism and its agents, such as President Wilson, and their plans for world conquest": in other words, his isolationism.

In general, it may be said that the textbook distributes its praise most lavishly among two sorts of authors: old-fashioned realists (unless they happened later on to fall foul of the Soviet myth), and latter-day fellow-travellers, whether or not they ever attained to the status of realists in literature. Preference is given to old-fashioned Liberals like Dreiser who mistook Stalinism for a radical-democratic movement. On the other hand, a conservative neo-Romantic like the young Thomas Mann is treated with a good deal of politeness because of his subsequent evolution in the direction of political humanism-cum-liberalism, not marred (as in the case of Gide) by any criticism of the USSR. In short, the criteria for judging Western authors are so selected that they can be made to fit almost anyone who at any time took up a favourable attitude towards the Soviet Union. Literary valuations are subordinate to political tests.

Mr. Graham Greene's recent work has understandably attracted considerable interest in the Soviet Union. Left-wing

[10] p. 483.

Catholics are now in good standing there and if they happen to be critical of the United States, their unfortunate theological beliefs are politely overlooked. Mr. Greene's recent novel, *The Quiet American*, has been criticised in the USA, although it has also become a popular best-seller there. In the USSR, where it has now appeared in a Russian translation (both in book form and in instalments in one of the literary magazines), it is not indeed exempt from criticism, but its ideological overtones have been quickly perceived and are being given sympathetic treatment.

From a special discussion of the book, arranged by the writers' union and reported in *Inostranaya Literatura*,[11] one gathers that Soviet critics have on the whole reacted favourably to Mr. Greene's portrayal of the three-cornered struggle in Indo-China: between the French, the pro-Communist Vietminh, and the American " intruders." Thus Mr. A. Anikst considers that his treatment of the subject is interesting and discloses not only literary ability, but " humanist " sympathies, although his basic attitude towards the war is pacifist—a fact regretted by the Soviet critic. His weaknesses include a failure to contradict the French allegations of cruelty against the Vietminh. " This is a great pity, for the author affirms by the very logic of his novel that the North Vietnam army waged war for the liberation of the country from the colonisers, and for bringing the desired peace to the people of Vietnam." On the other hand, he has " discovered a most interesting artistic form for . . . condemning the pretensions of the most reactionary sections of the American imperialist bourgeoisie and their ambition to conquer the whole world." He is also praised for not confining his criticism to the United States. " He does not give unconditional support to England, but rather sees all the negative features known to a journalist familiar with the political and military-political reality of his country."

A. Startsev is somewhat reserved. Until recently, he thinks, Greene formed part of the " reactionary " literary group which includes writers like Arthur Koestler, John Dos Passos, and Aldous Huxley. His new novel reflects the political bankruptcy

[11] 1956, No. 7.

of this coterie, some of whose remaining members have now fallen silent. As a writer, he is a follower of Hemingway. There is no need to look for any particular originality in either the author or the book. Its chief significance is political.

A. Elistratov sees a parallel with Mr. Richard Aldington's recent critical biography of T. E. Lawrence, and with the work of James Aldridge. Although Greene has himself acknowledged the influence upon his work of Fielding, Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and James Joyce (*i.e.* one classic against three "decadents"), and although he must be reckoned part of the "decadent" school in English fiction, his attitude towards ethical and aesthetic questions is more serious than that of his contemporaries. His Catholicism is by no means a final term in his development. His constant struggle for a satisfactory solution of the ethical problem testifies to an inner uncertainty. Elistratov sees a considerable step forward in this new book, as compared with *The Heart of the Matter*, which releases the hero only through suicide.

B. Isakov notes that Greene is regarded by some people in England as the leading British novelist of this generation. He himself thinks him an excellent writer, and disputes Elistratov's characterisation of *The Heart of the Matter* as reactionary. "I have not come across a parallel unmasking of Catholicism, written with such power. Some Catholic!" Isakov also defends Greene against the charge of taking a condescending attitude towards the Vietminh. In conclusion, he registers his belief that Greene has come to the parting of the ways—hence the attacks directed against him in the American bourgeois press.

T. Lanin wishes to draw attention to the basic contradiction in Greene's new novel: on the one hand, it represents a break with his old pessimistic attitude. On the other, there are no clear historical perspectives; the author has, however, at least come to understand that the artist cannot stand aside from a social conflict involving the life of millions. Lanin regards the figure of Pyle, the "Quiet American," as a considerable literary achievement, because it portrays someone who may be subjectively honest and who yet causes untold damage through his activities. This problem, he thinks, concerns the younger

generation in the United States, now called upon to serve the dark purposes of reaction. Pyle appears both as a hangman and a victim. The reader understands that the real guilt lies with his teachers, although his personal responsibility is not belittled, and he is deservedly held up for our condemnation.

7

THE LITERARY SCENE, WINTER 1956–57 *

IT is no longer possible to doubt that the Soviet leadership is seriously concerned over the intellectual ferment introduced into the USSR by recent events in Poland and Hungary, notably in the universities. Previous chapters of this survey have dealt exclusively with unrest among the young, especially the student population. At a different level, uncertainty and criticism have lately manifested themselves in the literary field, and evoked fairly energetic official counter-measures. "Literature" in the USSR covers such a wide field that one need not be surprised to find *Literaturnaya Gazeta* [1] thundering against revisionist trends in literary criticism on the familiar grounds that they are incompatible with the principles set out in Lenin's pamphlet on "Party Organisation and Party Literature," and that if tolerated they would "lead us back to bourgeois liberalism." The current debate in fact concerns not merely "Socialist Realism," that perennial topic of ideological (in the double meaning of that term) discussion, but the principle of *partiinost* (party-mindedness) itself.

Mention of Lenin in this context should serve as a warning against the too hasty assumption that what is at stake concerns merely the fluctuating fortunes of the de-Stalinisation campaign. This is by no means the case. There are solid grounds for believing that the Party leadership intends to proceed with its long-range policy of reaffirming Lenin's rather than Stalin's authority in all spheres of public life. Within a day of Khrushchev's now notorious speech extolling Stalin as a model fighter against "imperialism," the entire Soviet press carried a *Tass* announcement heralding the forthcoming publication of a new fifty-five volume edition of Lenin's complete works. Soviet

* Chap. 7 first appeared in *Soviet Survey*, 1957, No. 14.
[1] January 5, 1957.

writers are now being told almost daily that it was Lenin, not Stalin or Zhdanov, who introduced the principle of Party control over all spheres of existence.

The extent to which this issue is bound up, in the minds of Party propagandists, with the recent upheavals in Eastern Europe, is made manifest by the attacks which since the beginning of this year have been directed against the ideological promoters of liberalisation in Poland and Hungary—notably of course in the latter country. It is typical of this state of mind that an article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*,[2] by Ya. Strochkov (" An Inexhaustible Source "), which ostensibly deals with Lenin's familiar views on *partiinost*, automatically issues into a tirade against the Polish critic Toeplitz, and even more against Professor Lukacs, the veteran Marxist-Leninist scholar who last November briefly appeared as a member of the short-lived Nagy Government in Hungary. Both had been guilty of formulating demands for liberating culture from administrative fetters, and in the case of Hungary at least the awful consequences of such a departure from the theory and practice of tight Party control over all means of communication had not failed to manifest themselves. As Strochkov notes, Lukacs must have learned from his brief tenure of office in the Nagy Government that censorship is in fact a necessity. As is customary in official Soviet apologetics, this issue is disingenuously linked to Lenin's assertion that " the working class " is quite competent to form its own opinion of cultural values. Since the Party is supposed to represent the working class, it follows for Strochkov and his colleagues that to depart from the principle of Party control is to evince lack of confidence in the working class, and by implication in socialism. *Quod erat demonstrandum.*

The significance of these polemics is to be found in the illumination they cast upon the current attempts to re-establish " Socialist Realism " as a doctrine beyond challenge by critics of official control in the arts.

The period under review, mainly the winter of 1956–57, was marked by some lively discussions among critics and writers (of which only muted echoes reached the outside world) and by the

[2] January 10, 1957.

appearance of some interesting new works. Meanwhile the general directives given out by Party spokesmen during these months were in the now familiar vein: there was to be a return to "normal," *i.e.*, to the unqualified acceptance of political guidance, and a reversal of the previous trend towards "excessive" criticism of the Stalin epoch. *Protiv bezideinosti*, best translated perhaps as "Against lack of ideological content," became the official slogan, thus by implication casting doubt upon the moral seriousness of the writers and artists who were struggling to break through the official censorship. In actual fact, the cautiously nonconformist works in question did not lack "ideological content"; it was rather that their "message," though well concealed, was displeasing to those in authority. Yet *Literaturnaya Gazeta*,[3] as indicated above, continued to direct its fire against the lack of *ideinost* and *partiinost* displayed at certain recent discussions among writers, when apparently there had been some talk of "officially inspired panegyrics" and "literature as the servant of politics." This to the official literary journal smacked of anti-Leninism and indifference to the sacred tenets of "Socialist Realism." It was incumbent upon Soviet writers to administer an energetic rebuke to people who mouthed such irresponsible phrases. At the moment, unfortunately, "their organisations display hardly any activity in this respect. Even Party members prefer not to become involved in discussions on these topics."

What exactly took place at these writers' meetings is not altogether clear, but the published reports indicate that in at least some cases disciplinary measures were later taken against critics of the official line. A Ukrainian author was expelled from the Writers' Union, and others were rebuked for having, in private conversations, dropped remarks critical of Party policy. *Sovetskaya Kultura*[4] quoted a speaker at another conference of Ukrainian writers to the effect that "some ideologically and politically unstable writers and artists, who are influenced by bourgeois ideology, have lost their capacity for correctly appraising the international and domestic situation." At yet

[3] January 5, 1957.
[4] January 8, 1957.

another meeting in Kiev, attacks were delivered on Polish and Hungarian authors for having adopted " reactionary views "; the literary monthly *Novy Mir* (which had spearheaded the recent critical approach) came in for sharp condemnation; and Dudintsev's novel *Not By Bread Alone* (of which more below) was likewise attacked. A meeting at Rostov reported in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*[5] was made notable by an official appeal to Soviet intellectuals to " intensify their revolutionary vigilance at a moment when international reaction is attempting to take the offensive against the camp of peace and socialism." This was clearly a sequel to the Hungarian upheaval, and the necessary " revolutionary vigilance " was promptly displayed by the publication of an Open Letter to French intellectuals (signed by Mikhail Sholokhov and some dozens of lesser names) testifying to the signatories' belief in the beneficent purpose of Soviet armed intervention in Hungary.

Even more significant perhaps were the official speeches delivered by L. Novichenko and A. Surkov at the Ukrainian writers' plenary session in Kiev.[6] Once more the Ukraine was chosen as a sounding-board for the promulgation of the official line, later to be formally adopted at the general writers' plenum in Moscow, in late February. Novichenko, who delivered what may be described as the keynote address, was clearly chosen for political reasons, since his literary qualifications are far from obvious. Significantly, he directed his chief diatribes not against " American imperialism " but against " the anti-Marxist theories of social reformism and opportunism " (*i.e.*, democratic socialism), and " those who clamour for absolute freedom." After condemning the leading Hungarian writers, notably G. Hay, for having helped to promote the Budapest uprising with their bourgeois-anarchist-individualist slogans about democracy and liberty, he came nearer home by denouncing certain " demagogues and chatterers " for having complained about the detrimental effect of the " cult of the individual " upon Ukrainian literature. So far from this being true, it was rather the case that most of the leading Ukrainian authors of this generation

[5] December 29, 1956.
[6] *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, January 15, 1957.

had reached the pinnacle of creative maturity during the thirties and forties, *i.e.* precisely during the Stalin era. In a further side-glance at the malcontents (three Ukrainian authors and the journal *Novy Mir* are mentioned by name), Novichenko made what may fairly be described as his one telling point, a quotation from the late A. Dovzhenko: "Nobody asked you to lie, gentlemen, and furthermore, if you lied then, who will believe that you are truthful now?" Not perhaps an easy question to answer.

A. Surkov, who delivered the companion speech on behalf of literary officialdom, also thought that the Stalin era had on the whole left a very considerable literary legacy. Certain adjustments had to be made after Stalin's death, but "the real trouble is that for a brief while we were confused. Not everyone reacted in the same fashion." There were unfortunately some people who took certain revelations greatly to heart, and came up with "an anarchist rejection of all our achievements." Surkov's other principal theme was the need to continue the struggle against "cosmopolitanism," concerning which "there may have been exaggerations," but which basically remained an important issue. "Whatever may be said about exaggerations, cosmopolitanism remains a weapon in the arsenal of our enemies. International reaction frequently takes refuge in the propagation of cosmopolitan ideas."

The discussion that followed, if one is to believe the official account, disclosed a gratifying degree of near-unanimity in support of the official line, the only discordant note being struck by one Rudenko, who maintained that the writers of his generation had had their eyes opened by the XXth Party Congress and had become "realists" only since this historic event; a suggestion for which he was properly rebuked by his colleagues.

There appears to have been a slightly greater degree of nonconformism at the Georgian writers' plenum held last January, to judge from the account published by S. Chilaya in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, January 22, 1957. "We heard voices which gave mistaken interpretations of 'freedom of thought' and literary freedom. But we are not at all partisans of *any kind* of freedom . . . We Soviet writers do not support a freedom in literature

which stands in contrast to the principles of Party-mindedness (*partiinost*) and Communist ideological content (*ideinost*)." The symbolist, decadent, futurist, etc. trends in Georgian literature previously condemned would not be rehabilitated. As for Stalin and certain works devoted to him, one ought not to be too hard on their authors, since " one must not forget that Stalin's name is inseparably linked with the struggle for the cause of the working class and the Communist Party."

The Ukraine and the Caucasus having sounded the approved note of conformism, it was the turn of Moscow and Leningrad to set the seal on the neo-Stalinist orientation. At this point, however, the official campaign ran into trouble. Just how serious the trouble was cannot be determined with any certainty from the hints which appeared in public, but it seems significant that late in January the Party members of the Moscow and Leningrad writers' associations were convened at special meetings and urged to combat certain " recent unhealthy manifestations " in Soviet literature. The keynote addresses at these gatherings were delivered by Party secretaries (Mme. Furtseva at the highest level !) not by writers, and the emphasis was placed on the need to " pass once more to the offensive," while " holding the frontal positions " and " keeping our ideological powder dry " [7]—a thoroughly confusing picture from the tactical viewpoint, at least to a military observer. It is noteworthy that hardly any of the better-known authors seem to have spoken at these meetings. Of those who were urged to recant in public, Olga Bergholtz sent a letter which was published without comment, while one from Vera Ketlinskaya was " thought unsatisfactory by those present, since it did not contain a sincere admission of mistakes." In both cities, new Party committees on literature were chosen, their predecessors having failed to conduct a sufficiently energetic campaign against the deviationists.

As a minor curiosity it may be noted that one speaker thought it necessary to point to the " fantastically large " editions of certain low-brow Western authors (including Dumas and Conan Doyle) as a menace to the dissemination of serious Soviet literature. This complaint would appear to fit in with the recent

[7] *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, January 26, 1957.

warning of a Party official in Stalingrad [8] against the infiltration of "alien views" by way of Western literature and films. "Take even the good films from the capitalist countries—they have a bourgeois effect on our consciousness. Foreign scientific and technical literature likewise disseminates idealistic views among us." These and similar complaints do not seem to reflect a high degree of confidence in the superiority of the home-grown article.

From these symptoms of official nervousness in the face of unrest among the intellectual élite, one may turn to those manifestations of cultural policy which reflect the continuation of trends set in motion earlier last year by the decisions of the XXth Party Congress. The most important of these is an attempt to make "Socialist Realism" more palatable by freeing it from some of the more fantastic aspects of the later Stalin era.

It is important to bear in mind that the directives of the XXth Congress, and the general climate of opinion generated by it, continue to have their effect on the revaluation of Soviet literature, while the rehabilitation of authors formerly banned or silenced has by no means come to an end. There are exceptions to the rule that most of the banned authors of the thirties and forties are now being republished, *e.g.* the ban on Boris Pilnyak (believed to have been executed in 1937 or 1938) has not been lifted, nor is the Soviet public allowed to glimpse the works of Evgenyi Zamyatin (d. in France 1937) whose writings anticipated Orwell's satires on totalitarianism. Among those rehabilitated are such once popular Soviet playwrights as Ivan Kataev and Sergei Tretyakov, whose works disappeared in the late thirties.

In many of these cases it is no doubt simply a matter of rectifying what even from the Stalinist viewpoint was a slight mistake, *e.g.* the execution of such faithful followers of the dictator as Mikhail Koltsov, Bruno Jasienski, Vladimir Kirshon and others. In other instances, *e.g.* the re-issuing of poetry by writers like Esenin and Bagritsky, who were ignored during the forties without being officially condemned, it is simply a matter of returning to the official practices of the earlier Stalin era. A recent poetry anthology includes a section of previously

[8] *Partiinaya Zhizn*, November, 1956.

unpublished writings by some of the most important literary figures of those years, notably Mayakovski and Esenin, as well as selections from the literary remains of Maria Tsvetaeva, who died during the war, and Perets Markish, one of the Jewish writers executed in 1952. (The circumstances of his death have not so far been made public in the USSR.) The pattern remains confusing and contradictory, certain names being taboo as before, *e.g.* Osip Mandelstam and Prince Mirsky, while in regard to Pilnyak and Zamyatin the official *Literaturnaya Gazeta* has commented : " We do not need them." Isaac Babel, another victim of the 1936–37 purge, is to be republished, notably his famous collections of Civil War stories entitled *Red Cavalry* (but his " naturalist " and " decadent " tendencies are duly condemned in an article in *Kommunist*, No. 12, 1956). An edition of the works of Sergei Tretyakov, whose *Roar China* was among the better-known plays of the twenties, is reported ready, after a lengthy period when nothing was heard of this author who disappeared in the great purge; other recent publications include a collection of the writings of Yuri Olesha.

At the level of official art criticism, this partial resurrection of pre-Stalinist literature is accompanied by a cautious groping for new formulas designed to reaffirm the essentials of " Socialist Realism." This process can be seen at work in such recent pronouncements as " The Task of Literary Research in the Light of the Decisions of the XXth Congress " [9] and " For a Profound Study of the History of Soviet Literature." [10] Both articles stress the now familiar theme that " Socialist Realism " has in the past been interpreted too narrowly, while general philosophical and sociological theses have been mechanically transferred into the literary field. Moreover, too much significance was attached to Stalin's personal views, thus causing Gorki and Mayakovski to become infallible yardsticks for the evaluation of literary productions. Pre-revolutionary literary criticism was dismissed as useless, no account being taken of its " progressive " features. Lastly, it is now conceded that, although " Socialist Realism " is of course the highest form of art, " this does not

[9] *Izvestiya Akademii Nauk*, 1956, No. 15.
[10] *Kommunist*, 1956, No. 12.

mean that any and every Soviet work is artistically superior to" works produced in accordance with different standards.[11]

The timidity displayed by editors and publishing houses also comes in for occasional criticism. Thus the review *Teatr* (1956, 11) notes that a recent edition of Lenin's writings on literary subjects omits his comment (in a letter) on a Paris production of Paul Bourget's *La Barricade*: "Reactionary but interesting." Nor did the editors have the courage to recall Krupskaya's jocular remark (in her memoirs): "Ilyich is a hopeless nationalist—he does not like Polish artists." The writer in *Teatr* is inclined to regard such editorial practices as "evidence of lack of faith in the intelligence of the Soviet public."

It is eloquent of the confusion now prevailing in some domains of Soviet literary life that Konstantin Simonov, one of the spokesmen of the Zhdanovist purge, should recently have got into trouble for going too far in repudiating the heritage of that disastrous period, including some of his own writings. In a lengthy article published last December in *Novy Mir*[12] this talented propagandist comes out with an admission of guilt and, more important, a qualified condemnation of Soviet post-war literature for having indulged in half-truths "and half-truths are the enemy of art." In most cases this did not mean that the authors were insincere, for most of them believed it would be possible at a later date to speak the truth. Still, there was a tendency "to swim with the tide." Among his own now regretted misdeeds he mentions two articles which were destined to have a considerable influence during the Zhdanov period: one in *Kultura i Zhizn*[13] in which he had gone out of his way to criticise Fadeyev's novel *The Young Guard* for giving insufficient prominence to the role of the Party during the war; and another in *Pravda* ("On An Unpatriotic Group of Drama Critics") which helped to launch the campaign against "rootless cosmopolitans" and in other ways became a kind of landmark in the post-war drive towards Russian chauvinism and anti-foreignism. Simonov now discloses that this particular piece of writing was

[11] *Ibid.*
[12] 1956, No. 12.
[13] Autumn, 1947.

" directly inspired by Stalin," and while he still maintains that the basic principles of the 1947–49 campaign against " cosmopolitanism " were sound, he now, in a masterly understatement, thinks it regrettable that as a result of the campaign " some writers and critics were deprived for a considerable time of the normal opportunities for literary work." No mention is made of those who were not merely silenced but actually imprisoned, and in some cases executed.

Going on to the vexed subject of " Socialist Realism," Simonov urges a broader and more liberal interpretation of this principle. A name, after all, can never exhaust all the properties of the thing named (a discovery Simonov owes to Engels' *Anti-Duehring*), from which it follows that anything produced by an author who believes in socialism and writes for " the people " should, in principle, be regarded as being on the right lines, whether or not it is labelled " Socialist Realism." It is the more important not to insist on too strict an application of formal criteria since unfortunately " Socialist Realism has been compromised by the Halleluyaism of recent years." In order to regain the confidence of those who have been alienated by these practices, a new approach is needed. S. concludes with an appeal to let bygones be bygones. All the writers known to him are sincere patriots. " There is no need to rub salt on wounds by dwelling on personal responsibilities for mistakes committed in the post-war period. What is needed is a collective discussion of past mistakes and delusions—and it ought to begin now."

This rather half-hearted *mea culpa* was already far too much for the guardians of literary orthodoxy. Writing in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* M. Charnoi commented irritably that Simonov had been quite right in the first place to criticise Fadeyev's novel, the second (revised) edition of which was a considerable improvement on the first. *Kommunist* [14] interpreted Simonov's remarks as an attack on Party policy in general. L. Denisova, in a long-winded discussion of " Partiinost and Socialist Realism " [15] complained that to treat Socialist Realism as a mere means to an end was to rob it of its meaning and to deprive Soviet art of its

[14] 1957, No. 1.

[15] *Sovetskaya Kultura*, January 12, 1957.

particular flavour. *Literaturnaya Gazeta* [16] likewise saw fit to remind its readers that the post-war resolutions of the Central Committee on the subject of art, *i.e.*, the Zhdanov decrees of 1946–48, "remain essentially in force," and *Kommunist* (*loc. cit.*) strongly warned against expressing doubts with regard to the wisdom underlying these decrees.

What the official school regards as a tolerable form of realism —as distinct from the suspect variety now associated with Dudintsev's notorious *Not By Bread Alone*—appears from the prominence lately accorded to a group of three young writers, Ovechkin, Troepolski and Tendryakov, who have in common a certain standard attitude towards such recognised evils of Soviet society as bureaucracy, careerism, and petty tyranny in everyday life. Ovechkin has since 1952 made a practice of pillorying these traits and gained a small reputation for outspokenness, without laying himself open to the suspicion of harbouring dangerous thoughts. Tendryakov likewise specialises in denouncing bureaucratic callousness at the lower levels of the hierarchy, as in his recent novel *Uchabi*, where managerial heartlessness towards an individual worker is duly stigmatised. This group of writers has won official praise, and their "genuine courage" has recently been favourably compared to the imaginary daring of "all sorts of Dudintsevs." [17] Unlike Dudintsev, whose portrayal of managerial dishonesty and political careerism has shocked the official critics by its pessimistic implications, the "troika" makes no attempt to relate its criticism of isolated incidents in Soviet life to the basic features of Soviet society. All wrongs are righted in the end, and all the fault is put on individuals, never on the system. Not surprisingly this form of "realism" has won considerable official approval.

Dudintsev having been mentioned, it is perhaps noteworthy that the locale of his forthcoming novel (announced for this year) is laid in a *kolkhoz*, *i.e.*, at a safe distance from the centres of power. This talented young novelist, whose *Not By Bread Alone* was last year's literary sensation, is currently in disfavour

[16] January 8, 1957.
[17] *Cf. Oktyabr*, 1957, No. 1; *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, January 25, 1957.

for having drawn an appalling picture of the tribulations of an honest man in a corrupt society. It remains to be seen whether he can keep it up. His hero, Lopatkin, the luckless inventor of a machine for casting iron pipes, is railroaded to Siberia by jealous superiors and rivals, and though reinstated in the end, fails to secure the dismissal of his opponents who remain firmly entrenched in their various positions. The book seems to have created its impression largely because of its sombre picture of human relationships in the Stalin era. As a " production novel " it would not have been significant: the stymied inventor who must battle official resistance has been a stock figure of Soviet literature since the first Five Year Plan. Nor is it quite accurate to say that Dudintsev has written an indictment of the organisation of Soviet industry. Had this been his aim, his critics would have been justified in protesting (as they have done) that conditions cannot be as bad as all that, having regard to the indubitable record of the Soviet economy. What Dudintsev has done is something different and more radical: he has indicted Soviet society by challenging the official picture of human (not industrial) relations. It is his devastating account of dishonesty and distrust at all levels, even among close friends and relatives, that has got beneath the skin of the official reviewers; that and his manner of portraying the cynicism with which the official phraseology is employed by brutal careerists who not only trample on colleagues and rivals, but explicitly profess complete contempt for the human values they extol in public. Here Dudintsev, to judge by the angry reaction of literary officialdom, has touched upon a very raw nerve.

Two writers who had acquired a considerable reputation before Dudintsev broke into print, Daniel Granin and S. Kirsanov, have lately gained more attention—and drawn attacks upon themselves—by writings critical of the official mores. Kirsanov's poem, *Seven Days of the Week*, published in *Novy Mir* [18]: the story of an " electronic heart " which laughs, weeps, speaks, is silent, jubilant and dejected on order, draws a veiled but unflattering portrait of those in power, and has been duly condemned for its display of " unmitigated pessimism."

[18] 1956, No. 9.

Granin's short story, *His Own Opinion*, also published in *Novy Mir*,[19] likewise pillories the habits of the ruling bureaucracy. It was at first recommended by *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, and subsequently condemned by *Partiinaya Zhizn* (a journal which normally ignores literary subjects) as "harmful," an opinion which naturally prevailed, since *Partiinaya Zhizn* is specially written for Party functionaries and consequently carries considerable weight. It may or may not be significant that Granin and Kirsanov are both of Jewish origin, and that their writings appeared at a time when *Literaturnaya Gazeta* indulged in one of its periodic bouts of veiled anti-semitism. Other recent productions conform more closely to the official view of "permissible conflicts" in Soviet society. Pavel Nilin's *Zhestokost* (Cruelty) published in *Znamya* (Nos. 11 and 12, 1956), describes a clash between two Chekists in Siberia during the Civil War. One of them, Malyshev, sees some good in everyone, including counter-revolutionaries, and tries to temper justice with mercy; his colleague, Uselkov, favours "administrative measures" in all doubtful cases. In the end Malyshev commits suicide, *i.e.* the hero does not prevail, a conclusion for which the author was duly rebuked by some reviewers. Another recent work, *Ways of artistic Creation*, by Osip Cherny,[20] describes the situation in the Soviet theatre, the main theme being the tension between courageous innovators and anxiety-ridden time-servers who refuse to take the smallest risk. Both novels are obviously built to a pattern, and from a literary standpoint their value is small; though to be fair one must add that one of their main faults, a certain woodenness in the central character, is also shared by Dudintsev's work.

The literary magazines published during the opening months of 1957 confirm the trend noticeable in novels and stories of the above-mentioned kind. Compared with the Stalin epoch there is greater outspokenness, but scepticism and pessimism remain as firmly banned as before. The main taboos must not be challenged, and all conflicts must be resolved in the final chapter. Within these limitations, there is greater freedom in choosing

[19] 1956, No. 8.
[20] *Zvezda*, 1957, Nos. 1 and 2.

new subjects. Thus Natalia Ilina's novel *Homecoming* describes life among the White Russian emigrés in Manchuria during the twenties—a subject hardly conceivable under Stalin, though the treatment is safely orthodox. *The History of a Love* [21] has for its theme a love affair between a Soviet girl student and a young Hungarian who meet in a Leningrad hospital, and after their convalescence decide to settle in—Budapest! The story ends in the summer of 1956, the heroine having made up her mind, not without some serious heart-searching, to take up residence outside the USSR in the name of internationalism. The theme is presented in the form of six letters to the editor from an authoress who signs herself Marina P. and who is clearly the heroine of her own semi-autobiographical novel. One wonders what has become of her.

For the current year we are promised new novels by Mikhail Sholokhov and Konstantin Fedin, both among the great names of Soviet writing. It will be interesting to see whether their work approaches the level of their output in the twenties, when they could claim to have made a significant contribution to Russian literature.

Inostranaya Literatura, the literary periodical devoted to non-Soviet writing, like the other major Soviet magazines, tends to give more space nowadays to Asian literature, and of course to the "people's democracies," than to Western Europe and America. This policy obviously reflects political trends and therefore requires no comment. The line of the publishing house for foreign literature has been somewhat different. Of the 195 books translated by it in 1955, 57 came from the United States, 30 from England, 14 from France, 10 from Western Germany, whereas the list of the "popular democracies" was headed by East Germany (eight) and China (five). It should be noted, however, that most of these books are of a scientific or technical character, and that during 1956 the proportion of translations from China and the satellites has grown. Yet time and again the critics complain that there is no overwhelming interest on the part of the Soviet reading public with regard to the "Socialist Realist" novels, poems and plays from China and Eastern

[21] *Znamya*, 1957, No. 1.

Europe, whereas middlebrow Western writings such as A. J. Cronin's novels are published in enormous editions in several Soviet cities at once. The regional publishing houses are charged with "duplication" in such cases—but the evidence suggests that they are simply trying to please their readers.

The attitude taken by the writers in *Inostranaya Literatura* towards Western literature is in conformity with the current attempt to backpedal from the "excesses" of the Zhdanov period, without going too far in the direction of liberalism. Last autumn, Mme. Motileva, in the columns of that journal,[22] criticised the Moscow University textbook on nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature [23] for its crude and almost uniformly hostile attitude towards the West. When the authors replied to the criticism,[24] in terms suggesting that "Western decadence" continues to be one of the main perils to be fought, the editors of *I.L.* took the opportunity to remind them that it had been common in the past to ignore the work of such well-known, and on the whole, reputable authors as Remarque, Tagore, Hemingway, Feuchtwanger, and Roger Martin du Gard—a list which may perhaps strike the Western reader as a little odd.

At a considerably lower level, both as regards subject-matter and tone, the literary journals have recently begun to worry once more about the unhealthy influence of certain dubious importations from the West. Thus *Literaturnaya Gazeta* [25] takes time out to condemn *Dial M for Murder*, an undistinguished thriller which Western moviegoers are likely to associate with Her Serene Highness Princess Grace of Monaco. To the Soviet reviewer of the play, which seems to have attracted audiences in the USSR, it clearly represents a noxious influence: a sentiment echoed by a Party spokesman in Kuibyshev (formerly Samara) who denounced it as "alien to Soviet morality, harmful to the education of Soviet youth, and continuing the tradition of American gangster literature." The Soviet public seems to like detective stories, and since it cannot get them from its own authors, there is a demand for foreign

[22] 1956, No. 9.
[23] *Cf. Soviet Survey*, 1956, No. 9.
[24] *I.L.*, 1956, No. 12.
[25] January 3, 1957.

imports. This may serve to explain why Mrs. Agatha Christie's *Witness for the Prosecution* has recently been found worthy of condemnation. Among non-crime fiction, the same fate has overtaken Miss Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, originally published in English for the benefit of foreign language students in Moscow, and apparently popular with Soviet readers; it is now described as " harmful nonsense."

In discussing these weighty matters, Mr. Boris Isakov [26] draws attention to the well-known fact that some of the Western plays at present being shown in the USSR belong to the arsenal of imperialistic warmongering. " World reaction from time to time attempts to launch an offensive on the ideological front. In these circumstances we must give careful examination to the ideological and theoretical basis of those foreign works with which Soviet audiences and readers are becoming familiar. We must resolutely distinguish between works of art and mere fabrications, counterfeit matter, and falsifications." The writer takes pride in the fact that the Soviet public is not narrowly nationalist in its tastes and that all the best foreign works are being translated. To substantiate this assertion he cites Graham Greene, Alberto Moravia, William Saroyan, Heinrich Böll, Hemingway, Feuchtwanger, Remarque, Steinbeck, François Mauriac, Somerset Maugham, Sinclair Lewis, J. B. Priestley, Pratolini and Lillian Hellman. In actual fact, a statement such as that " Greene, Mauriac, Faulkner, Hemingway, and Moravia are accessible to the Soviet public " means no more than that suitable selections from their works are included in carefully edited anthologies of foreign literature. The occasional translation of an entire novel by Mauriac or Greene (*e.g.*, *The Quiet American*) does not signify a departure from the criterion of political usefulness, since the works chosen are invariably of a kind calculated to deepen the Soviet public's suspicion of all things Western. In this respect there has been no substantial change in recent years, though the practice has become a little more flexible than it was under Stalin.

Even by East European standards, the strait-jacket remains fairly tight. One can hardly imagine a Soviet journal following

[26] *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, January 3, 1957.

the example of Poland's semi-free press and publishing Orwell, but what is really remarkable is that even Bert Brecht has not been considered quite suitable for the Soviet reader or playgoer. He is, indeed, constantly praised, and only quite recently a Soviet historian of literature, Professor Ya. Elsberg, has complained of the shallowness of Western critics who fail to see the connection between Brecht's literary achievements and his political views.[27] But when all is said and done, the fact remains that while Brecht's plays are shown in the West, they are withheld from the Soviet public. *Inostranaya Literatura*[28] notes that Brecht has been performed all over the world, except in the USSR. "Brecht's dramatic productions have not been fortunate in the Soviet Union. Not one of his plays has ever been performed, save for a (not very successful) showing of *The Beggar's Opera* at the Kamerny theatre, over a quarter of a century ago. It would be wrong to gloss over these facts. Brecht himself has frequently drawn attention to this sad state of affairs—without success." It is true that even in East Germany the authorities have at times shied away from their late poet laureate, but in East Berlin at least Brecht's theatre has become a Communist show-piece. The reason for his unpopularity in the USSR is not difficult to guess: he does not fit the official formula.

In the article noted above, Elsberg (himself a 1937 purge victim who had the unusual good fortune to escape with his life and resume his career) tries rather lamely to defend "Socialist Realism" against such Western critics as Malcolm Cowley. After stressing the contrast between Soviet optimism and Western pessimism, he develops the theme that Western literature is unduly influenced by Freud and Jung. He also dislikes Kafka, who "as a writer is monotonous and poor." Western preoccupation with him reflects panic fear of sound and healthy instincts—it propagates an abstract subjective approach "which has nothing to do with reality." So much for Kafka.

Elsberg's general approach appears to represent the furthest limit of officially tolerated liberalism at the present time.

[27] *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, December 10, 1956.
[28] 1956, No. 12.

Compared with the vocabulary of the Stalinist period he is quite reasonable, and some of his observations on modern Western literature are substantially in tune with the views of the more conservative and anti-modernist critics in the West. The real trouble with him, as with other Soviet critics, is his failure to perceive that there is no such thing as a unified Western outlook corresponding to "Socialist Realism," but rather a babel of discordant voices, some of them remarkably like his own. Soviet culture being what it is, even a comparatively sophisticated critic like Elsberg is tempted to suppose that there must be a unified world outlook on the other side of the Curtain. This is certainly what the Soviet public is told by its press, including the literary journals, which now have a little more leeway, but have not noticeably changed their manner of looking at things Western.

Part Two

History and Philosophy

8

INTRODUCTION *

CHAPTERS 8 to 11 of this book have an unusually strong "political" flavour. Some explanatory remarks may therefore be advisable. The year 1956 witnessed an upheaval in Communist party ideology which was bound, sooner or later, to find expression in the various scientific disciplines, in general scholarship, and in the arts. When this process occurs, it will become necessary to refer back, from time to time, to what is now happening in the most important realm of Soviet "culture" (in the widest sense), namely, the collective thinking of the Communist party. Conversely, it is possible even now to plot the general curve of de-Stalinisation in some important domains, *e.g.*, political science, history, and economics, from the hints which have filtered through the protective screen of censorship.

The most important of these ideological newcomers at the moment concerns the history of the Communist party itself and, more generally, the manner in which the party views its role in Soviet society. It must be borne in mind that the task of establishing a common ideological denominator implies much more than the manufacture of a few general slogans; it covers the entire intellectual field. The party must, if it is to go on functioning, interpret the various specialised agencies of culture to one another. It must not merely tell the biologists what to think of philosophy, and *vice versa*, but maintain a common intellectual idiom for the use of all the members of the Soviet élite—a great and growing stratum. The concoction of a new party history, which is now in progress, therefore requires watching, even if one happens not to be particularly interested in the complex details of Communist politics. When the new textbook, now promised for 1957, replaces the *Short Course* of party history in use since 1938, it will set the tone not merely

* Chaps. 8–11 first appeared in *Soviet Survey*, 1956, No. 8.

for lecturers on Communist theory, but for every Communist the world over who has to deal with other political forces—chief among them the Socialist parties of the West and the nationalist movements of the East. It will likewise affect the mental atmosphere in the USSR to an extent unimaginable in other societies. This therefore is a good moment to ponder the probable shape of things to come, so far as it can be discerned from the discussions now going on in the wake of the XXth Party Congress.

It is worth bearing in mind at the outset that these discussions do not centre exclusively, or even mainly, on what in the current idiom is called the "cult of personality." It is in the Western world, not in the USSR, that "de-Stalinisation" takes precedence over all other topics. The Soviet leadership is more concerned with material issues, which indeed dominated the XXth Congress and are currently given pride of place in the Soviet press. At the Congress the majority of speeches dealt with economic matters, and Khrushchev himself went out of his way to suggest that under present conditions the economic side of Marxist doctrine was of greater relevance than any other aspect of Communist theorising. This dictum has since been parroted throughout the length and breadth of the USSR—itself an interesting comment on the limits of intellectual freedom now available to party members. *Pravda*, *Izvestiya*, and *Voprosy Ekonomiki* are currently doing what they can to familiarise their readers with problems such as the location of industry, advance payments to collective farmers, etc. By contrast very little is being said about the misdeeds of Stalin. The topic certainly continues to be discussed, but it is plainly not the intention of the party leaders that it should become the central preoccupation of Soviet citizens. For the time being at any rate, the primacy of economics over politics is stressed at all levels of Soviet thinking, from the most sophisticated to the most primitive.

This is the general background against which one has to consider the impending revision of party history and the consequent elaboration of a new form of Soviet Communist orthodoxy. The process is still in an early stage, but it has already led to the withdrawal of the *Short Course* of party history

published in 1938, *i.e.*, after the conclusion of the great " purge," by the Central Committee of the party. We know from Khrushchev's " secret " address of February 25 that Stalin's role in the compilation of this authoritative document was considerably smaller than that attributed to him in the authorised biography of the Leader; in particular, it seems unlikely that he was the author of the more theoretical sections. But this is immaterial. The work which bears his imprint is now falling under an official ban. What this means can only be appreciated if one recalls that for fifteen years it served as the main instrument of instruction in Soviet history, not merely for party members, but for Soviet citizens generally and the youth in particular. It was distributed in millions of copies, translated into practically all foreign languages, and treated as sacrosanct. Its impending replacement by a new textbook is nothing short of a mental revolution.

9

PARTY HISTORY REVISED

IT WAS after Stalin's death in 1953 that the *Kratki Kurs* (*Short Course*) started on its road to oblivion. In 1954 a brief attempt was made to supersede it, in an indirect manner, by placing in the forefront of instruction an ungainly three-volume compilation of " Resolutions of Communist Party Congresses." This proved a mere stop-gap, and it has now been decided to provide the party with an altogether new textbook. Clearly it was not sufficient to utilise the resolutions of past congresses, for a generation of party historians and theorists brought up on the worship of textual quotations was bound to find in such a compilation material suitable for the defence of almost any conceivable thesis. As a guide to mass education it was useless, and the decision to publish a new and improved party history followed as a matter of course. In the spring of 1956 therefore the publication of a massive new two-volume textbook to replace the *Short Course* was officially announced, and at the same time it was indicated [1] that the authors of pre-Stalin textbooks on party history, *e.g.*, Yaroslavsky, Bubnov, Knorin, Nevsky and N. N. Popov, whose works were withdrawn from circulation in the later thirties, had been unfairly maligned. The actual publication of the new textbook seems unlikely to occur before 1957—the fortieth anniversary of the Revolution as it happens. Its general outline is, however, already evident from a number of writings published during the past few months in the more authoritative journals. The following summary of the major revisions due to come into force in 1957 thus constitutes a kind of preview of what Communists and other Soviet citizens are about to be told about their own history when the textbook is ready. No judgment is of course implied as to the veracity of the revised version now in preparation, nor is it possible here

[1] *Cf. Voprosy Istorii*, 1956, No. 3, editorial.

to summarise the actual course of events, however briefly. The intention is simply to highlight some of the major ideological changes which appear to be under way.

The nineteenth-century Russian radicals (Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, etc.) who have hitherto been treated as direct precursors of Leninism, are likely to suffer a slight but perceptible diminution in status. It is now once more the orthodox view that Soviet Communism has only one source, namely Marx-Engels. On the other hand, the early Russian Marxists profit from this revision, at least to the extent that they remained orthodox during and after the "revisionist" controversy at the turn of the century. The principal beneficiary of this change is Plekhanov, the "father" of Russian Marxism, whose oscillations between the Bolshevik and Menshevik factions (culminating in straightforward hostility to Lenin and the Bolsheviks after the October coup) always presented Soviet writers with a particularly hard nut to crack. It is now argued that his merits have for some time been underrated. "His role has been belittled in recent years." [2] The public is once more reminded that he was the true originator both of Marxism and of the Social-Democratic movement in Russia during the 1880s, and that Lenin held him in great esteem.[3]

There is likewise a slight but perceptible change in the attitude taken towards the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries, *i.e.*, the rival socialist parties during the pre-revolutionary period. It is no longer good form to treat the Mensheviks as enemies of the working-class, although they are still to be regarded as opportunists. It is now admitted that they formed part of the labour movement, and Soviet historians are blamed for passing over in silence the existence of joint "action committees" of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks during the 1905 revolution. As regards the Social-Revolutionaries, and the Populists (Narodniks) generally, a change in the wind is foreshadowed by the appearance in *Voprosy Istorii* [4] of a detailed study by P. S. Tkachenko of the relations between the S.R. and Bolshevik parties. Here

[2] *Voprosy Istorii*, 1956, No. 3.
[3] This point is also made in *Kommunist*, 1956, No. 6.
[4] 1956, No. 5.

the reader is told that both the *Short Course* and Soviet historians generally have erred in concentrating on the negative aspects of Populism and omitting to praise its concern for the interests of the peasantry and other progressive features. "Populism is described as the worst enemy of Marxism from the 1870s onwards. But in actual fact there was no Marxism in Russia at that time. . . ." According to the new version, the Narodniks held Marx in great esteem, but considered (wrongly) that Russia's historical development would follow a path of its own; this misconception being the source of all their subsequent errors which were then inherited by their successors, the Social-Revolutionaries.

We have here an interesting attempt to come to terms with an aspect of the national tradition which, unlike the relatively small Menshevik wing of the labour movement, had genuine popular support. It is of course not admitted in the USSR that Lenin himself stemmed from a Populist background, but the Populist roots of Bolshevism are too strong to be entirely hidden from the inheritors of the Leninist tradition. Hence the violence of the factional antagonism which is carried over into the history books. On the other hand, the fact that *Narodnichestvo* (Populism) represented a native strand of radicalism in the pre-Marxian era, enables the Soviet historians to hark back to the indisputably home-grown sources of the official creed. It has proved possible for Stalinist historians to pour abuse on the Narodniks, while extolling their representative ideologist, Chernyshevsky, as a precursor of Lenin. In the present phase the emphasis is rather on the positive role once played by the Populist movement as a whole. The problem is always the same: how to connect Soviet Communism with a native strand of radicalism which at one time had the whole-hearted support of the peasantry.

The new general rule for the treatment of this period is that Lenin's importance has in the past been under-estimated, or at any rate not sufficiently stressed; by contrast, Stalin is now said to have benefited from excessive adulation. One gathers the impression that Soviet historians are not finding it altogether easy to execute the new policy, for the simple reason that it is very difficult indeed to say anything fresh about Lenin's role in the

pre-revolutionary era. Contrary to what is now being asserted. Lenin was always allotted first place. The new line thus translates itself into a concerted drive to publish even more material about him; the "cult of personality" is thus shifted back one stage without changing its essential character, since the enormous literature on Lenin, now in process of being further expanded, was and is wholly uncritical and adulatory. The shift in emphasis from one cult hero to another has important political and psychological implications, for the Soviet population generally tends to associate Lenin with the somewhat more relaxed conditions which preceded the Stalinist "iron age"; but as an exercise in intellectual liberalisation it fails to pass muster as long as the fiction is maintained that Lenin was never mistaken, while his person of course remains sacrosanct.

By contrast, Stalin is now put in his place as merely one among the Old Bolsheviks. One example out of many will serve to indicate the new trend. In the *Soviet Encyclopedia* the late V. V. Vorovsky is described as a faithful pupil and supporter of Lenin *and Stalin* from the 1905 party congress onwards. This kind of nonsense is no longer tolerable to the editors of *Voprosy Istorii*: "Can one say that Vorovsky was Stalin's pupil after 1905? It would be more correct to say that Stalin was Vorovsky's pupil, rather than *vice versa*." [5] Stalin's role in the old Caucasian revolutionary organisation from which he stemmed is now likewise painted in less extravagant colours. At the same time a good many of the old guard veterans who had fallen into oblivion are being restored to their pedestals. Publishing houses are criticised for mutilating or suppressing their memoirs, and the *Soviet Encyclopedia* is rebuked for denying them their just due, while withholding from the reader the fact that the late Vyshinsky was an active Menshevik until 1920.[6] So far, however, this rehabilitation of the Old Bolsheviks is limited to men not involved in the ideological battles of the late twenties and the "purge" of the thirties; the major figures still await their posthumous reinstatement in the hall of fame. On the whole, the current treatment of this period now accords with the line

[5] *Voprosy Istorii*, 1956, No. 5, p. 143.
[6] *Ibid.* p. 145.

adopted in Yaroslavsky's *History*, published in 1928–31, *i.e.*, after Stalin had defeated his rivals in the struggle for power, but before he had begun to eliminate and defame them.

The principal new feature in 1917 was a reminder that Stalin was not infallible (as indeed he himself admitted as late as 1924, before the " personality cult " had gone to his head). *Voprosy Istorii*,[7] in the person of its assistant editor, Burjalov, takes up the theme of his tactical errors in March/April, 1917, when he joined forces with Kamenev to oppose Lenin's well-known " April theses " on the need to give battle to the Provisional Government. The *Short Course*, ignoring Stalin's own confession of error in 1924, had dealt with this whole episode in characteristic fashion, *i.e.*, by painting a picture of Lenin and Stalin firmly allied against the rest of the party leadership. This particular piece of nonsense has now been dropped. Instead, the relevant discussions in the Central Committee are recalled in detail, and the reader is permitted to learn that Zinoviev (executed in August, 1936, in the first of the great purge trials) backed Lenin's uncompromising stand, while Kamenev (also shot in 1936) was allied with Stalin in opposing the Leninist line which led to the October coup.

The publication of Lenin's so-called testament, together with other material hitherto kept from the public, in *Kommunist*,[8] is a particularly painful blow for the exploiters of the Stalin cult. It " debunks " the cult on several counts: Stalin's bad personal relations with Lenin's wife, and ultimately with the dying Lenin himself; his responsibility (shared with Dzerzhinsky and Orjonikidze) for the brutal suppression of autonomist tendencies among the Communists in Georgia; and last but not least the preference shown by Lenin for other party leaders, including Trotsky. It is hardly a coincidence that the publication of this material coincided with a demand made in *Voprosy Istorii* [9] for a new history of the civil war and the restoration to their true position of military leaders such as Bluecher, Yegorov, Gamarnik and S. S. Kamenev (not to be confused with the Bolshevik party

[7] 1956, No. 4.
[8] 1956, No. 9.
[9] 1956, No. 3.

leader). These civil war heroes, with others like Unshlikht who are also mentioned, perished in the " purge " of the late thirties for reasons which remain obscure. It is now indicated that in future it will become possible to estimate their true role by reference to hitherto secret party documents, including the protocols of party congresses which so far have not been available even to reliable party members.

The years 1924–35 present difficulties of a peculiar kind for the group now in power, since its members are committed to the thesis that Stalin was, broadly speaking, justified in the general policies he adopted (collectivisation, industrialisation, " socialism in one country "), but yet is to be blamed for surreptitiously building up his personal power towards the end of this period. Thus he was right in launching the collectivisation drive (with all that this implies), and he is expressly credited with the success of the first Five-Year Plan. He was likewise justified in fighting the " Left " and " Right " opposition groups (a theme already expounded by Khrushchev in his " secret " address, and repeated in the Central Committee resolution published in *Pravda* on July 2), but he is held blameworthy for suppressing internal party democracy and gradually establishing a personal dictatorship. On the whole, however, his merits throughout this crucial period greatly outweighed his faults, and there is no suggestion of any sort that his opponents may have had valid grounds for their own reasoning. Nor has the fiction that Trotsky opposed rapid industrialisation been denied. The " Leninist core " now in power which, in its own present estimation, shared the merit of these achievements, clearly has no intention of permitting any retrospective criticism.

At the outset of the period 1936–41 Stalin was still conducting the " struggle for party unity " against such anti-Leninist groups as the Trotskyists who reflected the interests of the former exploiting classes and the petty bourgeoisie,[10] but whom it would be an " over-simplification " to describe as agents of hostile espionage organisations.[11] The main criticism of Stalin here concerns his " erroneous " thesis (presented to the Central Committee in

[10] *Voprosy Istorii*, 1956, No. 3.
[11] *Ibid.*

March, 1937) on the sharpening of the class struggle, as a justification for the reign of terror *against party members*. This led to " uncertainty and suspicion " throughout the party cadres, and to the exploitation of this atmosphere by dishonest careerists. Stalin was likewise guilty of " violating the norms of party life " and of liquidating numbers of old Communists who were personally and politically loyal to the leadership. For the rest, it is suggested, though in passing rather than as part of a sustained argument, that genuine oppositionists might have been got rid of in a less spectacular manner. There is as yet no hint that the Moscow trials of 1936–38 were wholly fraudulent; perhaps that is still to come.

Military events during the period 1941–45 are now described in a somewhat less dishonest manner. There are explicit references to the heavy defeats suffered by the Soviet forces during the opening phase of the conflict, and even to the " desperate situation in general." [12] This is coupled with a certain grudging acknowledgment of the reality of Allied help, and a marked tendency to play down Stalin's directing role during the war. In contrast to Western authors like Mr. Deutscher, the present crop of Soviet writers tends to greater realism. There is marked stress on the (alleged) weakening of his personal authority during this period and the consequent assumption of greater responsibility by other party leaders—a theme insistently stressed in the Central Committee resolution of June 30.[13]

The period 1945–53 (like the war years) was not covered by the *Short Course*, so that there is less need to rewrite history. On the other hand, these were the years of the recrudescence of terrorism, culminating in the " Leningrad Affair," the " Doctors' Plot " and the deportation of national minorities. In his unpublished address to the XXth Congress, Khrushchev dealt at length with these aspects of Stalinism in the dictator's declining years, and some of his *obiter dicta* have since been translated into officialese for the benefit of the millions of Soviet citizens who at the time of writing had still not been permitted to read the

[12] *Voprosy Istorii*, 1956, No. 5.
[13] *Pravda*, July 2, 1956.

full text of the speech. With the publication in *Pravda* [14] of the Central Committee resolution already mentioned, the official line of defence against the strictures pronounced by the Italian Communist leader, Palmiro Togliatti, in his now famous statement [15] has assumed what for the time being appears to be final form. Its main themes are familiar by now: Stalin had to be supported because there was no alternative to his personal rule; he had won the initial support of other party leaders for his policies, and later was able to dispense with it by doing away with party democracy. In these circumstances nefarious characters such as the former Mussavatist agent Beria [16] were unfortunately enabled to perpetrate their unspeakable crimes. Stalin regarded his personal dictatorship as a necessity, and he had the tacit support of "the people," who would not have understood his displacement. Nonetheless it is false to suggest that Stalinism grew out of the root conditions of Soviet society. It was, on the contrary, an aberration which has been left behind. A repetition is impossible, now that the party has retraced its steps and once more adopted the correct Leninist posture, etc.

Perhaps the most notable feature of this somewhat self-contradictory theme, variations on which are now being played from one end of the USSR to the other, is the total omission of any attempt to answer some of Togliatti's more searching questions (let alone those addressed to the present leadership by some of the less prominent Communists abroad). In particular, there has been no response to his suggestion that the bureaucratisation of the party apparatus, to which Lenin drew attention in his last letters and writings, might have had something to do with the growth of Stalin's personal rule. This

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] *Cf. L'Unita,* Rome, June 17, 1956.

[16] This particular piece of self-exculpation will probably have to be revised or dropped at a later stage. Few people even in the USSR are likely to be taken in by the assertion that the second most important man in Russia was the "agent" of a tiny nationalist sect in the Caucasus, to which in his youth he may or may not at one time have belonged. This kind of thing is interesting chiefly because it so clearly reproduces the technique of the Moscow purge trials. Even if it could be shown that Beria had ever adhered to one of the innumerable Caucasian splinter groups which by the thirties had all been liquidated, this would of course prove precisely nothing—except possibly that the fact was not unknown to Stalin and his colleagues (and regarded as unimportant by them).

subject is evidently considered dangerous. Likewise, no notice has as yet been taken officially of the Italian leader's blunt assertion that the Soviet Union can no longer serve as the sole institutional model for world Communism. To judge from the prominence given to the rather more orthodox affirmations of the French Communist leadership, it is not intended to take up this perilous theme in the near future.

10

COMMUNISTS AND SOCIALISTS

THIS subject is becoming the topic of a growing number of articles, book reviews, and of course speeches by the Soviet leaders. The general approach is now well established: the relationship between Communists and the various Socialist movements of Europe and Asia is to be of a " practical " character, stressing the common defence of world peace and the interests of the working classes; there is to be close co-operation with Socialist leaders as well as with their followers (" United Front from above," in technical parlance), though naturally on the unspoken assumption that in the long run the Socialist workers will see the error of their ways and come over to the true church; lastly, discussion of " abstract " issues (such as democracy) is to be avoided.

This theme is developed at great length in *Voprosy Ekonomiki* [1] by B. Ponomarev, member of the Central Committee and one of the delegates to the French Communist party congress at Le Havre last July. It is evident from his argument that he is sensitive to the charge that the new tactic merely aims at detaching the Socialist masses from their leaders. P. maintains on the contrary that where there has been close co-operation between the two parties, *both* have benefited. The chief example cited is a curious one: in Central and South-Eastern Europe, *i.e.* in the " People's Democracies," it appears, " the enemies of the working class did not succeed in driving the Social-Democrats on to the fatal path of rejecting unification " with the Communist parties which swallowed them up and expelled or jailed the majority of their former leaders. This extraordinary argument is backed up with evidence tending to show, in the author's estimation, that the ex-Socialists received a fair deal. As proof he cites the fact that the Politburo of the Hungarian Communist

[1] 1956, No. 5.

Party includes a former Socialist, while the same is alleged for a candidate (!) to the parallel body in Rumania. For Poland and East Germany the reader is referred to the puppet Premiers, Cyrankiewicz and Grotewhol, both former Socialists. Bulgaria is not mentioned; bearing in mind that before the managed revolution of 1944–45 the Social-Democratic parties in all these countries were stronger than the Communists, this is a very curious balance-sheet indeed.

The prospect is not rendered more alluring by Ponomarev's reference to the tolerable fate suffered by the so-called " minority parties " in Mao Tse-tung's China, *i.e.*, the non-Communist groups supervised and controlled by the ruling party. " These parties have the right to nominate their own candidates at elections and to appear as an opposition in parliament. But as parties of the working people they participate with the Communists . . . in the construction of socialism and thus play an important social-political part in their country." Ponomarev here foresees a possible objection, namely, that Western or Asian Socialists may object to this kind of subordination, but he makes light of it. Considering that Socialist parties have in the past been content with the role of " His Majesty's Opposition," he feels that they have no particular reason for being difficult when invited to fulfil a similar function under Communist control.

This line of reasoning is not pursued by E. Chernyak, writing in the June number of *Novy Mir*. Taking as his text the editorial policy pursued by the *New Statesman*, he finds some encouragement for the view that " Communists and Socialists have much in common." Favourable mention is accorded to an editorial stressing the " tremendous amount of good done by Communism in Russia "; an appeal by Mr. Kingsley Martin to Socialists to take part in the " peace " movement; and in particular Professor Cole's recent call for a frank discussion with Communists on the question of finding common ground.

This kind of writing is clearly dictated by tactical considerations. There are few signs of a more mellow attitude towards Socialist parties at the quasi-academic level. V. M. Turok, in *Essays in Austrian History 1918–29*, and Y. P. Nasenko, in *Brief Reports of the Institute of Eastern Studies* (both published in

recent months by the Academy of Sciences), may be regarded as typical, the former dealing with a phase in the history of one important Social-Democratic party, while the latter takes Indian Socialism for his field of study. Turok's book is the more interesting. Its subject-matter is significant, since Austrian Social-Democracy was the most Marxist of the various Central European labour movements, and likewise most effective in meeting Communist competition. In some respects the book maintains an intellectual standard unusual in Soviet publications. It is scholarly, readable, well informed and—wonder of wonders—it has an index: something not seen in the great majority of Soviet productions. It is, however, sufficiently orthodox in sentiment to pass muster, *e.g.*, the Austro-Marxist leader, Otto Bauer (probably the most influential sympathiser the Soviet Union possessed), is described as " a man who dedicated his entire life and all his abilities to the defence of capitalism against the socialist revolution " (p. 436). There are the usual diatribes against left-wing Socialists as being particularly dangerous to the working-class, and there is even some fulsome praise of Stalin's old pamphlet on the national question which is said to have " unmasked " the Austro-Marxist standpoint.

Nothing of great relevance emerges from Nasenko's study of Indian Socialism. The left wing (Lokhia) comes in for the customary abuse, and the entire movement is written off as the fruit of bourgeois machinations directed against working-class unity. Special ridicule is reserved for the Socialist doctrines, and for the " bhoodan " (voluntary land-reform) movement. Lastly, the party is characterised as an American agency, on the strength of alleged evidence presented by the author in regard to its finances. It is, however, said to be in process of decomposition, and therefore presumably not dangerous. All this would seem to be fairly orthodox in the Stalinist manner and certainly not conducive to the kind of united-front strategy outlined by Ponomarev in the article mentioned above. Perhaps the new watchword has not yet filtered down to the lower levels of the hierarchy.

11

STALIN'S PHILOSOPHIC LEGACY

" DE-STALINISATION " also affects the realm of abstract thinking. Under Stalin there was monolithic uniformity in the philosophical field as in others. This was secured by means of slavish quotations from authorities, not all of whom are now regarded as sacrosanct. The extent to which uncertainty has begun to invade this realm can be gauged from a review of Professor Acton's work *The Illusion of the Epoch*: Marxism-Leninism as a philosophical creed, which appeared lately in *Voprosy Filosofii*.[1] After noting that Professor Acton relies heavily on writers specialising in anti-Marxist polemics, *e.g.*, Bochenski and Wetter, the reviewer makes the surprising suggestion that these authors in their turn may have been led astray by various unrepresentative

> popular philosophical publications issued in the Soviet Union during the past few years. Many of these . . . did in fact display the characteristics of dogmatism and scholasticism, and were therefore made the subject of sharp criticism at the XXth Party Congress. These inadequacies of our ideological work are invariably exploited by the bourgeois authors of anti-Marxist textbooks who aim at presenting Marxism as a dogmatic structure, in isolation, so to speak, from practice. The fact that the bourgeois ideologists prefer to describe and criticise Marxism not on the basis of its true sources, but in relation to popular writings whose deficiencies have been noted in the Soviet press, speaks for itself. The bourgeois critics of Marxism wish to avoid a serious critique of the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin . . . etc.

What these tentative remarks point to is something bigger than the current attempt to get away from excessive scholasticism in popular expository writings. Behind this secondary issue there looms the all-important question how much weight is to

[1] 1956, No. 3, pp. 244 *et seq.*

be attached in future to Stalin's own theoretical formulations. His thesis on the inevitable sharpening of the class struggle during the building of socialism has already been discarded, and now some of his utterances on the subject of linguistics, as well as on economic problems, are beginning to be criticised as "dogmatic," notably those pertaining to what is now described as the "scholastic dispute" over "base" and "superstructure." [2] Now it so happens that Stalin, in his pamphlet on language, took the opportunity to stress the role of the conscious factor in history (notably the State) at the expense of the "passive" economic base. This issue is anything but academic. If it is to be revised, the consequences may be far-reaching. Stalin's celebrated essay "On Marxism in Linguistics" [3] is so important for the understanding of Stalinism as a system of thought (however rudimentary) that even an implied criticism of it must have important repercussions on Soviet thinking as a whole. In effect, Stalin in this pamphlet expelled the dialectic from history, revised historical materialism, and gave a theoretical (although very crude and primitive) justification for his earlier view that the all-powerful State (here included in the "superstructure") could transform the material "base" of society; in other words, he restored the autocracy to its traditional place in Russian thinking. This important issue was introduced in the form of a characteristically primitive discussion of the function of language—a discussion which became the starting-point for an endless flood of adulatory comment. All this is now in danger of revision, and with it—at least by implication—the ideology of autocracy itself.

There is, however, another side to the matter. By declaring that language is not a class phenomenon, Stalin at one blow freed at least one section of Soviet philosophy from some of the dogmatic chains that were weighing it down. In particular, his insistence that language is a means of communication for all members of a given culture made it possible for Soviet logicians and philologists to assert that the rules of logic are not "class bound," but objectively valid. He performed a similar service

[2] *Voprosy Filosofii*, 1956, No. 3, editorial.
[3] 1950.

for common sense in his last published piece of writing, the pamphlet on " Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR," by stressing the existence of objective economic " laws " to which Communist, like other, policies have to conform. It is by no means certain yet that these grudging concessions to realism will be preserved when the " liberalisers " get busy; it is even conceivable that, in the guise of removing the Stalinist dross from the Leninist gold, some of the old discarded doctrinaire aberrations may creep back.

This issue is necessarily bound up with the question whether dialectical materialism, as understood and taught in the USSR, is compatible with any kind of formal logic. Orthodox Communists have on occasion admitted that it is not. Makovelsky, a " bourgeois " professor before the revolution, and a reliable fellow-traveller thereafter, in an article published in 1950,[4] described logic as a " propaedeutic " to dialectic, but then went on to declare that formal logic as such is incompatible with dialectical thinking and related to the " metaphysical " world view. Few Soviet scholars, since the reintroduction of logic as a subject of teaching in 1947, have gone as far, but the tendency has been to stress the " class content " of logic. A decree of the Ministry of Higher Education, issued in 1948, condemned the work of the Department of Logic at Moscow State University for its " perverse, formalistic tendency . . . the estrangement of logical forms from the content of thought, from the living thought of the Soviet people." It also demanded that attention be given to the fact that

> The ruling classes throughout all history have used science, logic included, to strengthen their class rule, in consequence of which formal logic in Antiquity defended the ideology of slaveholders ; in the Middle Ages it was the hand-maiden of theology. and in capitalist society it was adapted by the bourgeoisie to keep the workers in ignorance, in order to hold the oppressed masses captives of bourgeois ideology.[5]

These primitive theses were subsequently adopted by Soviet logicians at the All-Union Conference of the Heads of Sections

[4] Quoted by Strogovich, *Voprosy Filosofii*, 1950, No. 3, p. 311.
[5] Quoted by Philipov, *Logic and Dialectic in the Soviet Union*, p. 56.

of Marxism-Leninism and Philosophy in Higher Educational Institutions (July, 1949), and since then have been a cardinal element of Soviet pedagogy. Whether they are compatible with the crude common-sensible views expressed by Stalin in his pamphlet on linguistics is a question which the editors of *Voprosy Filosofii* will have to fight out among themselves. What is certain is that the process of de-Stalinisation has not so far relieved Soviet higher education of the scholastic dead-weight it has carried for so many years. Nor is there any particular reason why it should. Stalin was not personally responsible for the state of mind reflected in the statement quoted above, and the dismantling of his authority cannot automatically produce sensible results in this sphere. More is required than an abandonment of the habit of relying exclusively on quotations from approved authorities. If they want to get out of their mental strait-jacket, Soviet philosophers must learn to do some fresh thinking. So far there is no sign that they have so much as recognised the need for it.

12

A SHIFTING LINE *

PREVIOUS issues of this survey have commented upon the gradual emergence of a post-Stalinist line in history-writing, the most important changes having to do with the gradual elimination of some of the grosser manifestations of Great Russian chauvinism. Thus it is no longer asserted that the aeroplane was invented by a Russian, A. V. Mozhaisky [1]; certain nationalist movements in pre-revolutionary Russia, notably in the Caucasus, are now admitted to have had " progressive " features despite the trouble they gave the Tsarist authorities [2]; Tsarist Russia is no longer described (on Stalin's authority) as a semi-colonial country, but as an imperialist power in its own right [3]; and lastly it is now conceded that certain " progressive " Russian thinkers of the pre-Marxian age have hitherto had their writings edited in a manner not strictly conducive to scholarly research.

Mention has also been made in this survey of the re-editing of Party history, with special reference to the early history of the Bolshevik Party, and the gradual emergence of a picture freed from some of the more obvious fantasies of the later Stalin era. Much of this is still being done in an indirect fashion, *e.g.*, by quietly emphasising Lenin's role at the expense of Stalin's. Now and then the emphasis is sharpened by giving credit to prominent figures of the early revolutionary and civil war years. Thus documents and recollections relating to Stalin's predecessor as General Secretary, Y. Sverdlov (d. 1919), as well as to other prominent figures of this period, have recently made their appearance with barely a brief mention here and there of Stalin's own role during those years. The civil war currently holds the centre of attention. *Voprosy Istorii* has been busy reviving lengthy accounts of the Red Army's half-forgotten

* Chaps. 12 and 13 first appeared in *Soviet Survey*, 1956, No. 10.
1 *Voprosy Istorii*, 1956, No. 6, p. 124.
2 *Voprosy Istorii*, 1956, No. 7, p. 67.
3 *Voprosy Istorii*, 1956, No. 6, p. 69.

campaigns against Kolchak and Denikin in 1918–19, and *Kommunist* [4] has published a joint study by no fewer than four different authors on the same topic. This is remarkable, bearing in mind that the ground is already well-trodden. Apparently some need for re-examination is felt. From a study of current writings one gathers the impression that they have been composed with a view to stressing the Party's role as the organiser of victory. Lenin, of course, occupies the centre of the stage. Trotsky and his associates are given no credit for the victories won, and indeed blamed for having rendered Lenin's task needlessly difficult by their blunders; but for the first time in many years these strictures are not coupled with charges of treason. There is little praise of Stalin, and every now and then he is on the receiving end of some calculated slight; *e.g.*, in describing Lenin's conciliatory attitude towards Vatsetis, the military commander associated with Trotsky, who was removed from his post in 1919, it is pointed out [5] that Lenin, though ruthless towards enemies of the revolution, was tolerant of people who had rendered important services, even though they were guilty of serious blunders. In general the authors are careful to rehabilitate as many Old Bolsheviks as possible, and to give a favourable account of the activities of former Tsarist commanders won over to the revolutionary side, as well as those new Soviet commanders who came into prominence during the civil war, but who were subsequently " purged." There are palpable inconsistencies as a result of the current attempt to rewrite the history of the civil war. Sklyanski, Trotsky's chief military aide, is described by *Voprosy Istorii* [6] as a bungling and incompetent fool, while General Boltin, writing in *Znamya*,[7] mentions him as one of the outstanding Soviet army leaders, naming him before Stalin and Frunze. . . . There are some unflattering remarks about Stalin's capricious behaviour, and in at least one instance (his alleged responsibility for outlining the strategy of the victorious campaign against Denikin) he is bluntly charged with attributing to himself the merit of a decision already taken by the Politburo.

[4] 1956, No. 12.
[5] *Voprosy Istorii*, 1956, No. 6, p. 27.
[6] 1956, No. 8.
[7] 1956, No. 8.

These latter-day corrections and revisions have not passed unnoticed in quarters still wedded to the once dominant school. It is perhaps significant of the current see-saw in Party thinking on the subject of de-Stalinisation that the old-line Stalinists have been able to hit back. Writing in *Partiinaya Zhizn* [8] E. Bugaev reviews a number of these " revisionist " articles, and concludes that they represent a reaction which shows signs of going too far. In particular he suggests that there is no need to revise the Soviet attitude towards Western historiography; he also defends certain authors, *e.g.*, Alpatov, who have come under fire for excessive zeal in this respect. Bugaev concedes that the Stalinist *Short Course* of Party history contains some mistakes, but denies that they can be corrected with the aid of pre-Stalinist writings which in his view were even less reliable. Nor is there any reason, he thinks, for taking a more favourable view of Menshevik and Social-Revolutionary activities during the pre-1917 period. He likewise complains that in some recent writings Stalin has not been given full credit for his attitude during the months preceding the October rising.

In earlier days this kind of rebuke in a Party journal would have resulted in an instantaneous surrender on the part of the historians. This time they have answered back [9] with counter-charges denying their critic's right to challenge what in effect is the execution of a task laid upon historians by the XXth Party Congress. For safety's sake this is coupled with an affirmation of resolve to oppose those nefarious elements " who under cover of struggling against the cult of personality would write off all our achievements, and distort the history of the Party and the State during the past twenty years."

From a report on some historians' conferences in Leningrad it appears [10] that—to quote a speaker at one of these meetings—" many historians do not as yet realise that a fundamental re-examination of a number of problems is inevitable: they continue to maintain the old, erroneous positions." Some of the participants seem to have been criticised for displaying a dogmatic

[8] 1956, No. 4.
[9] *Vide Voprosy Istorii*, 1956, No. 7, p. 215.
[10] *Voprosy Istorii*, 1956, No. 7, p. 188.

attitude and refusing to modify their concepts, while others caused alarm by adopting a "nihilist" attitude towards their subject, denying all merit to Soviet historiography, and in particular drawing mistaken conclusions from Lenin's well-known dictum that patriotic Russians loathe the slavish heritage of their people. It would seem from these brief and possibly garbled comments that the historians are having difficulty with the new "line," especially since no one in authority seems to be able to tell them just what the line is at the moment.

After some rather promising stirrings in 1955, recent months have witnessed a certain retrogression among Soviet authors in the field of philosophical theorising. In notable contrast to the mental vigour displayed by Communist writers in some of the satellite countries, *e.g.*, Poland and Hungary, Soviet philosophers seem content to mark time. Even where it is a question of taking issue with Western critics of Communism, the task is currently left to non-Russian Marxists. *Voprosy Filosofii* [11] gives space to a Polish author, Adam Schaff, for the purpose of demolishing the sociological doctrines of the late Professor Karl Mannheim, while M. Merleau-Ponty's essay "Les Aventures de la Dialectique" (essentially a diatribe against Sartre) comes in for critical comment—on the authority of French Communist writers (Roger Garaudy, Jean Kanapa, Georges Cogniot). For the rest, the editors rely on the grand old man of Hungarian Communism, George Lukacs. In his book, Merleau-Ponty had made polemical use of Lukacs's volume of essays *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein*, published in 1923 and promptly condemned as unorthodox by the reigning Party hierarchy of the day. We are now informed that Lukacs has published a letter censuring Merleau-Ponty for reviving an issue laid to rest with the official condemnation of one of the few original and important Marxist publications of the period. "Written more than thirty years ago, my book contained many mistakes," Lukacs explains. He might have added that nothing written by him since then has evoked comparable interest.

Editorially, *Voprosy Filosofii* [12] has sought to draw the

[11] 1956, No. 4.
[12] 1956, No. 3.

appropriate moral from the "discussions" of the XXth Party Congress in so far as they implied criticism of Soviet philosophy. This is done in two ways. First, there is the now ritual downgrading of Stalin. His formulations on the subject of "material base" and "cultural superstructure" (in his pamphlet on linguistics) are no longer sacrosanct; what is more, they are now said to have engendered a "scholastic" debate on this topic. Secondly, there is some retrospective criticism of "sectarian" attitudes towards Western philosophy and science, both classical and modern. Sectarianism is said to have taken the form of unduly deprecating Western "bourgeois" thought on the grounds that it was vitiated by idealist philosophy. As a consequence the positive achievements of Western science tended to be undervalued. They are now to be studied afresh, not omitting, however, that most burning of all topics, the "new forms" assumed by the class struggle in the capitalist world. In addition, it is the task of Soviet Marxists to study the problems raised by global co-existence of the "two camps," relations among "socialist" countries, and the problems of "socialist" society as such. Oddly enough, the reader is told that no serious work has yet been done in this field.

Soviet psychologists seem in an equally unadventurous mood. Psychotherapy has indeed been reinstated after being banned under Stalin and Zhdanov [13] but the Pavlovian conceptual framework remains sacrosanct. Here, too, the satellites have made better use of the "thaw." Just as Polish philosophers now permit themselves a more liberal interpretation of Marxism, so the East German psychologists are not afraid to mention Freud, though they are careful to qualify occasional praise with heavy doses of standard criticism. A recently published booklet [14] and an article in the East Berlin review *Der Aufbau* [15] set the tone followed in other publications: Freud is treated as an important critic of old-fashioned sexual morals, though the authors are careful to deprecate any suggestion that he was successful in revolutionising psychotherapy: this task is said to

[13] *Cf. Voprosy Psikhologii*, 1956, No. 3.
[14] *Freud*, by Alexander Mette, East Berlin, 1956.
[15] 1956, No. 8.

have been accomplished by the "materialist" Pavlov. The general tone of these writings, though condescending, is at least civilised and betrays a fair knowledge of the subject-matter. Friendly references to Freud can also be found among German Communist literary critics, *e.g.*, in *Neue Deutsche Literatur*,[15a] where it is suggested that his doctrines have helped to deepen the study of character. Remarks of this kind, however qualified by condemnation of "psychologism" in literature and other bugbears, are not merely absent from current Soviet writing, but seem hardly compatible with current intellectual standards in the USSR. Philosophy and psychology are much more closely tied to the Party line than literature or the arts, and even were their practitioners to be given greater latitude, it is doubtful whether their mental training would enable them to make significantly bolder use of their opportunities.

Under Stalin, and indeed down to 1954, the official "line" in economics laid it down that the non-Soviet orbit was not only shrinking geographically, but also declining economically, and in particular that the masses were subject to a steady process of pauperisation. The contrary views put forward by Western economists were occasionally mentioned, and of course condemned, but hardly ever discussed. For the past two years or so, this deadly pall of unthinking orthodoxy has lifted slightly, at least to the extent of making it permissible to debate certain topics previously ignored or perhaps considered too hot to handle. Some economists indeed continue to maintain that a major economic crisis in the West is about to burst, thus confirming the most dire predictions of the Stalinist school, but the majority seem to be content with emphasising the "extreme instability" of Western development. Where both groups meet is in maintaining that such progress as still takes place is very largely due to armaments expenditure and other artificial stimulants, which in the nature of the case cannot be relied upon to guarantee a steady rate of development.

Pauperisation is another issue on which Soviet economists seem unwilling to concede much ground to their critics (who now include the leadership of the American Communist Party,

[15a] East Berlin, 1956, No. 9, p. 144.

recently converted to the view that there has been some real economic and social progress in the USA). Thus *Voprosy Ekonomiki* [16] seeks satisfaction from information supplied by Mr. William Z. Foster, of the American C.P., to the effect that real wages in the United States were five per cent. lower in 1953 than in 1945. The only qualification admitted in writings of this kind is the familiar one that the "aristocracy of labour" may have improved its position relative to the bulk of the working population. The article just quoted, for example, reports (with a good deal of indignation) that skilled workers in the USA may earn as much as double the income enjoyed by the less skilled—not a very marked spread by Soviet standards. As for the well-known Western myth of full employment, E. S. Sherbakov, in *The Economic Situation in the Capitalist Countries* [17] notes with some apparent satisfaction that—according to information available to him, though not to Western writers—there are twelve million fully or partly unemployed persons in the United States at present, and a total of twenty-five million in the United States, Western Germany, Italy, and Japan combined.

Western attempts to speed economic development in backward areas are likewise examined in terms familiar from the recent past. "Point Four" schemes, and the various parallel efforts made elsewhere, are still dismissed as monopolistic attempts to exploit colonial wealth. A recent pamphlet on capital export (by G. F. Rudenko, *Znanie* [17a]) comes to the familiar conclusion that, when undertaken by Western countries, such "aid" does nothing to help, and much to hinder, the economic development of the regions concerned, whereas Soviet aid to undeveloped countries is not merely motivated by superior considerations, but economically effective as well.

In so far as there has been a slight intellectual "thaw," this makes itself felt rather in the domain of theoretical controversy. It is now once more good form to engage in lengthy disputation

[16] 1956, No. 7, p. 94.
[17] Moscow, August, 1956, p. 18.
[17a] Moscow, July, 1956, p. 6.

with representatives of economic liberalism. The more old-fashioned and uncompromising advocates of *laisser-faire*, *e.g.*, Professors von Hayek, von Mises, and Roepke, are clearly preferred as targets to the Keynesians and other modernists. Schumpeter tends to be ignored, since he does not quite fit the official categories, but *Voprosy Ekonomiki* [18] has felt it necessary to take note of his monumental posthumous *History of Economic Analysis*.[19] What particularly attracts the angry attention of the critic is Schumpeter's suggestion that certain bourgeois economists, including " the worst enemies of Marxism, such as Pareto, Keynes and others " have had something to do with the development of concepts relevant to economic planning. Schumpeter's qualified admiration for Marx likewise grates on the reviewer; it " betrays the worst enemy of Marxism," always anxious to appropriate the outward form of Marxian analysis, while rejecting its essence. Schumpeter's more radical conclusions are dismissed as intellectual trickery.

An attempt to deal critically with what might be described as the bourgeois left-wing in economics is made by I. G. Blumkin, in an essay on *American Political Economy*.[20] Not surprisingly, some attention is devoted to Veblen, who comes in for severe criticism, largely on account of his implied suggestion that the technical intelligentsia is destined to play a key role in social development. This thesis is sharply condemned on the familiar grounds that the technicians are subservient to their capitalist masters. In this connection, Stalin is quoted to the effect that capitalism will not be overthrown by the technical intelligentsia, but by the workers, since the aforementioned group is hopelessly tied to the ruling stratum and does not play an independent role.

The bulk of the study is, however, given over to criticism of Keynes and his American followers, notably Alvin Hansen and A. Lerner. The tone is familiar: Keynesian thinking is characterised as demagogic, and there is even a suggestion that it is related to Fascism, its " democratic " and pacifist overtones being as insubstantial as its economic recipes. Among these,

[18] 1956, No. 5.
[19] 1954.
[20] Academy of Sciences, 1956, p. 279.

the "New Deal" prescriptions for pump-priming and other counter-cyclical measures are dismissed as patently ridiculous. On the statistical side, S. Kuznets and others are charged with misrepresenting the true situation. In sum, "Whatever their external differences, the current anti-crisis programmes have a common feature: they seek to make the workers carry the full burden. The various suggestions for raising private consumption and introducing certain social reforms are mere fig-leaves designed to conceal the real nature of the operation. The transfer of the burden . . . to the shoulders of the workers is reflected in the growth of taxation, the increase in public debt, and the inflationary processes. But these methods for plundering the workers inevitably involve a shrinkage of mass consuming power . . . this is the Achilles heel of the bourgeois anti-crisis programme. The anti-crisis measures promote the more intensified exploitation of the workers, the unleashing of wars, and the militarisation of the national economy, but they cannot solve the task of preventing a crisis." [21]

If this sounds familiar enough, it is nonetheless worth noting that Soviet authors now appear more familiar with Western writings, notably on the subject of undeveloped countries. Professors Ragnar Nurkse, Eugene Staley, and others are frequently quoted, and occasionally misquoted. Judging from *Voprosy Ekonomiki* [22] they are still regarded as writers who seek to "justify the destructive activity of imperialism. With the use of sophistries and outright falsifications they try to persuade these countries not to establish their own industries, but to place the stress on agricultural development . . . Among their arguments is neo-Malthusianism," *i.e.*, birth control, which is sharply condemned, as is the argument in favour of gradual rather than rapid development. All such suggestions, in the writer's view, expose their authors as conscious or unconscious ideologists of imperialism.

One of the surprises of the XXth Party Congress was the amount of attention devoted to the shortcomings of Soviet jurisprudence. Students of the Soviet scene have tended to

[21] p. 166.
[22] 1956, No. 3, p. 125.

regard this sudden concern with the legal system as an expression of the Soviet élite's half-suppressed craving for greater personal and material security. However that may be, the lead given by the speakers at the XXth Congress has now been followed up, in the theoretical sphere anyhow, with a growing stream of "revisionist" criticism of the Stalinist school. Doctrines no longer sacrosanct include certain of Stalin's own formulations, as well as a speech made by A. N. Poskrebyshev (Stalin's personal confidant and *eminence grise*) in 1952, and a textbook written by the late Andrei Vyshinsky, another prominent exponent of Stalinism in the legal sphere.

It is not altogether easy to gauge the extent to which such writings reflect whatever reforms are now under way in the legal sphere. The main emphasis at present is upon the need to counter Western criticism of Soviet institutions. *Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo i Pravo*[23] freely concedes that "our ideological and class enemies abroad devote far more attention to criticism of Soviet legal literature than we to theirs." Such counter-criticism is described as important in view of the present co-existence of the two camps—which, it is invariably stressed, does *not* extend to the realm of ideology. Unfortunately, it now appears, Soviet jurists were content to leave the task of criticising bourgeois political science to the philosophers, who in turn assumed that their colleagues of the legal faculty were discharging the job.

Quality, however, is now said to be in default almost as much as quantity. Soviet writers are accused of ignorance of Western literature, out-dated polemical habits (*e.g.*, use of irrelevant quotations) and indifference to the finer distinctions between the various competing schools of Western thought. Among the sadder instances of this parochialism the writer notes the recent failure of a Soviet jurist, A. F. Kleinman, to distinguish between the British author P. F. Philbrick and the American F.B.I. agent of the same name, who some years ago announced the successful accomplishment of a mission as undercover agent among American Communists! This confusion appears to have led to painful results: "Kleinman does not

[23] 1956, No. 4, *editorial.*

even make it clear whether he wants to refute the British semanticist or the American provocateur! Such suggestions have nothing in common with scientific criticism or argument."

At a more elevated level, Soviet writers are now urged to study "bourgeois" literature, to familiarise themselves with the working of parliamentary and legal institutions in Western countries, and to pay greater attention to "bourgeois" authorities such as H. Kelsen, W. Friedman, R. Pound, W. Lippman, J. Frank, R. Savatier, Laborde-Lacoste, and others. They are to give particular attention to any suggestion that the State in capitalist society may lose its oppressive character and become capable of directing the economy in the interests of the people. Any such notions are now clearly regarded as involving a major ideological peril.

13

GEORGE LUKACS ON CO-EXISTENCE

IT used to be said of the Hungarian-born economist Eugene Varga that he could always be relied upon to supply the Kremlin with a suitable theoretical rationale for the imminent change in the "line"—incidentally a claim belied by Varga's temporary disgrace in 1949–50. In the philosophical sphere, a similar position has for many years been occupied by Varga's countryman, George Lukacs, still regarded by most European Communists (though not apparently by the Russians) as the authoritative exponent of Marxist orthodoxy. A pupil of the Romantic school before the first world war, a convert to Leninism ever since, and an apologist for Stalinism from about 1930 to 1953, Dr. Lukacs still conserves something of his former position among scholars and men of letters on the strength of his remarkable erudition and his unsurpassed mastery of Marxist-Leninist scholastics. It was therefore not without interest that observers of the ideological scene behind the Iron Curtain watched his gradual emergence from semi-obscurity at the height of the Zhdanovist witch-hunt to renewed eminence at the present day. First in his native Hungary, and now increasingly throughout the East European satellites, he is beginning to sound the ideological tocsin for the new "era of good feeling" and political co-existence. The following is an abbreviated version of a lecture delivered by him in Budapest last summer, and republished in the East German Communist periodical *Aufbau* last September. It is clearly intended to lay down the philosophical "line" for the new political phase.

The speaker begins by analysing the significance of Lenin's dictum that *historical* arguments cannot be literally applied to short-range *political* problems, illustrating this topic by reference to "bourgeois" parliamentarianism, which had become historically out of date by the time of the October Revolution,

but nonetheless conserved sufficient political importance to compel the attention of the nascent Communist movements in Western Europe after 1917. The fact that the " dictatorship of the proletariat " made its entry into world history with the October Revolution did not exempt the Communists from taking parliamentary institutions seriously (as pointed out by Lenin, in *Left-wing Communism, an infantile disorder*). Likewise, " in the articles he wrote during the war, Lenin repeatedly criticised . . . the notion that society is being split into two camps, the camp of progress, *i.e.*, of the socialist revolution, and the reactionary, *i.e.*, imperialist camp." It is recalled that Lenin refused to take such simplifications seriously, on the grounds that they made the attainment of revolutionary aims impossible.

" If we wish to draw conclusions from this for our own current problems, we are compelled to state that the universal truths of Marxism are realised dialectically, in such a manner as to allow not merely for conflict between some necessary tactical measure and the general historical conceptions, but in a manner affecting our strategy as well . . .

" In attempting to understand the history of the past few decades, while maintaining our standpoint concerning the fundamental significance for our epoch of the conflict between capitalism and socialism, we are obliged to recognise that since Lenin's death there have been two periods when this issue did not directly determine the strategy of the struggle for progress. Shortly after Lenin's death, there emerged all over the world a confrontation between Fascism and anti-Fascism. Without going into details, I think it can be said, in the light of our Marxist knowledge today, that numberless strategic mistakes committed by our Party resulted from an uncritical extension of the truths of 1917 and the immediately following revolutionary phase . . . into a period when the basic strategic problem was not the fight for socialism, but the trial of strength between Fascism and anti-Fascism.

" This includes Stalin's reference, in the late twenties, to the Social-Democrats as twins of Fascism, which proved such a hindrance to the Popular Front policy down to the Seventh Congress of the Comintern. Stalin's great error doubtless

resulted from his failure to perceive the contradictory nature of these great strategic problems.

"After the second world war and the defeat of Fascism, there emerged a new problem of the same kind. There is no need to go into details. As we know, it concerns the question of peace and war, of preventing war, the problem of co-existence. It is this which determines the basic strategic problems of our epoch . . .

"The fact that our strategy was not determined by the fundamental conflict of our epoch, that between capitalism and socialism, but by the struggle between Fascism and anti-Fascism, constituted a genuine dialectical contradiction, an expression of the real movement of history. The concrete outcome of this struggle was a tremendous victory for socialism.

"I consider that at present the struggle around the issue of war and peace, the fight for co-existence, plays the same part. There is of course no such thing as simple repetition in history, but here too we are concerned with a strategic problem which is going to dominate a whole phase of development, and I am certain we shall live to see great victories in this sphere.

"The epoch which ended with Stalin's death was not consistent in this respect, and this of necessity, for the fundamental axiom of Stalin's policy—the inherent need for a constant sharpening of conflicts—determined not only the internal affairs of the Soviet Union, *but also involved the perspective of a third world war.*

"Fortunately Stalin did not go right to the end in drawing conclusions from this doctrine; hence his policy also included elements of a recognition of the new epoch; but only elements. It was only after Stalin's death that a consistent policy could be introduced. I do not intend to go into details of this contradiction; let me merely refer to Stalin's speech at the XIXth Party Congress in which he laid down the function of the anti-war movement in our time (the chance of avoiding war in certain given cases), while introducing certain qualifications as to the possibility of pursuing such a policy under the conditions created by imperialism. There can be no doubt that since Stalin's death there has been a change in this respect, best exemplified

by the movement to end the Korean and Vietnamese wars and the entry into a period in which peace and co-existence have become possible. The XXth Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR—transcending in this respect the standpoint of the XIXth Congress—formulated this by laying it down that in our epoch it has become possible to avoid war, and that all policy must be based on the recognition of this fact. This involved a departure from the inconsistencies of the preceding phase . . .

" What follows from this for us? If we believe that a third world war will bring socialism at any rate to a large part of the world, we could leave it to the war, *i.e.*, to the superiority of the socialist camp in arms, to ensure the spread of socialism. But if we consider that we are on the eve of a prolonged period of peace, and that each and every capitalist country will be led towards socialism solely by the dialectic of its own internal development, then it follows that we—the Communists of the other countries—can influence this development only ideologically . . . The propagation of co-existence is thus indissolubly bound up with our profound belief in the ultimate victory of socialism. The more we take co-existence seriously, that is to say, the more humanely we construct socialism—humanely in terms of our own interest, in the light of our own development—the more shall we contribute to the final world-wide triumph of socialism.

" Permit me to illustrate the new situation in some spheres of world culture, in the sketchy manner appropriate to a lecture . . . Let me begin with a field which we tend to neglect, that of religion. . . .

" Lenin . . . pointed out that the basic element of religious life in our time is the insecurity created by capitalist living conditions. Hence no Marxist can be surprised to find that the post-war period, the period of the cold war and the fear of atomic conflict, resulted in an intensification of religious sentiment among many people. At the same time the great problems of our epoch entered the consciousness of the masses who still cling to religion; they could not very well escape the decisive events of world history. For we must emphasise that religion

is not some abstract ideology or product of the lecture-halls, but something that concerns millions of people. . . .

"Now here we encounter an interesting contradiction. During the twenties, Protestantism saw the emergence of the so-called Barthian school whose theoretical roots go back to an uncommonly reactionary thinker, the Dane Kierkegaard . . . The Kierkegaardian school encountered an interesting problem. It is a basic principle of Lutheranism—and one which is dangerous to the cause of progress in the world—that all authorities are instituted by God, *i.e.*, that Protestants are obliged to support the government of the day, no matter what it is. Yet the Barthian school opposed Hitlerism . . . and denied Luther's doctrine which implied support for Hitler's Fascism . . . There must be many among us who know the name of Dr. Niemoeller; he was here in Budapest for the meeting of the World Peace Council. Niemoeller's supporters included hundreds of Protestant pastors who went to concentration camps because they were not prepared to lend ideological support to Hitler's Fascism. And the same contradiction exists today, when the adherents of Barth and Niemoeller are in opposition to the imperialist policy of the Adenauer government, and are indeed among the most energetic and forthright supporters of the peace policy. It is evident that they are thereby serving the cause of co-existence and that they are doing so consciously, as is evident from their manifold writings and speeches. It would thus appear that there exists a contradiction—a very important, interesting and fruitful contradiction—between their ideology (the underlying reactionary Kierkegaardian philosophy) and their practical attitude which has been forced upon them by the concrete problems of the day, the problem of co-existence, the confrontation of bellicose and peaceful tendencies. . . .

"Of course, the connection is not always as clear as this. In the case of an institution like the Catholic Church, which is dominated by a unified centralised leadership, it is much more complex. None the less, the sectarian view too often expressed in our newspapers that the entire Catholic Church is nothing but a Wall Street agency is, of course, untenable. No doubt there are such connections with Wall Street and American Catholicism,

but that does not exhaust the current problem of the Catholic Church. . . ."

After a brief reference to the "worker-priests" episode in France, the speaker recalls earlier efforts of the Catholic Church to bring democratic mass movements under its control, starting with the so-called Christian-Social movement in pre-war Austria and leading in our days to the emergence of the Christian-Democratic parties in Italy, France, Germany, and elsewhere; special attention is given to the development of a left wing among the Italian *Democrazia Cristiana*, regarded as symptomatic of the inner crisis in modern Catholicism.

"Current historical events promote a deep stirring among the Catholic masses, and this stirring finds its reflection in the attitude of people who try to resolve the conflict between Catholic dogma and social conditions . . . within the framework of the faith . . . I am convinced that we are only on the threshold of this process. . . . Marxists must recognise, as our Italian comrades have already done, that this may be the beginning of a very broad movement with which it is possible to make contact. . . .

"This situation of the Catholic Church finds expression also at the highest level, in the official Catholic theology and philosophy. The Pope, who, as you know, has already spoken out against atomic war, has followed this up by two corresponding enunciations, in one of which he has refused to accept the unqualified identification of the Catholic Church with so-called Western culture. This suggests a tactical elasticity greater than that of many American politicians who simply identify Western culture with Christianity and mechanically oppose them to Eastern atheism. . . .

"Now in all this one can perceive tendencies towards co-existence. It is a reflection of the fear of finally losing the millions who live under socialism, and it also reflects the pressure of millions of peace-loving people. There is the same reflection in Catholic theology, where certain outstanding theologians, no longer content to dismiss Marxism as a species of vulgar materialism, sense the necessity of a serious confrontation. Thus the Jesuit, Brockmueller, suggests that Bolshevism should

be " baptised," and Professor Wetter, of the Papal Academy in Rome, discusses certain similarities of Thomist and Marxist doctrine. . . .

" We have there the possibility of a dialogue, of a discussion between theologians and Marxists. . . . In one case it has already been realised. A professor of theology in Graz, Reding, developing Wetter's ideas on the analogy of Thomism and Marxism, suggested that both have a common historical and philosophical root : St. Thomas derives from Aristotle, while Marxism stems from Hegel, who in his turn reflects Aristotelian influence. This suggestion has created a stir, and not only in theological circles. Reding has paid a visit to Moscow, where he was received by Comrade Mikoyan and took part in a discussion on atheism at the Institute of Philosophy in the Moscow Academy of Sciences. . . .

" Although this new way of facing the problem is only beginning to emerge, I am convinced that it reflects a feeling among many Catholics that it would be fatal for the Church to tie itself unconditionally to the chariot of imperialist capitalism. . . .

" Parenthetically, one may inquire what would have been the position of a philosopher in such a discussion who had never read Hegel, not to mention Aristotle, because he had learned from Zhdanov that Hegel was a reactionary philosopher and the author of a reactionary dialectic. There might well have ensued a dialogue in which the Catholic theologian would have argued on the basis of solid understanding of the old dialectic, while the sectarian Communist would have been helpless. . . .

" The uneasiness I have mentioned is, of course, not confined to the sphere of religion; in some respects its reflections there are in fact very faint. In the case of philosophy it can be illustrated by the phenomenon of Sartre's attitude in recent years. . . . When Pierre Hervé was expelled from the French Communist Party some months ago, Sartre wrote an interesting article. . . . There he points out—and this is not one of us, but a leading bourgeois thinker—that the entire bourgeois science is in a critical situation, that bourgeois philosophy is incapable of formulating new concepts, that it is unable to

fertilise science. The only philosophy capable of doing this, according to Sartre, is Marxism. Everybody, he maintains, expects Marxism to introduce such a renewal, but he also records the fact that present-day Marxism has failed to produce scientific works corresponding to these expectations. . . .

" I regard this description of the situation as being, broadly speaking, correct. It lights up once more the immeasurable possibilities resulting from the collapse of the cold war. *Stalinist dogmatism at bottom thought in terms of an inevitable war*—not in so many words, but with a certain hardly concealed wink; there was an expectation that the bourgeois world-picture would thereupon collapse by itself, or be liquidated by force. In consequence there was no appreciation of the fact that in the new situation only those Marxists can work on the ideological front who are able to influence the non-Marxist masses and to lead the non-Marxist intelligentsia along a new road. . . .

" The significance of Sartre's pronouncement is considerable because his existentialism was the only post-war bourgeois philosophy which had real influence beyond the academic confines. . . . When Sartre exemplifies the crisis of bourgeois philosophy, when he points to Marxism as the way out, then this fact has international importance. And if he has not found a personal solution, that underlines our own responsibility all the more.

" In facing our responsibilities we are handicapped by the traditions of sectarian dogmatism during the phase which now lies behind us. . . . There is the problem of so-called immanent criticism. By this I mean a method of argumentation in which we conditionally start from the premises of the thinker whom we criticise, develop their logical consequences, and thus deduce proof that the premises are faulty. Genuine discussion is possible only on the basis of such a method of argumentation. . . .

" Another problem is constituted by the fact that many dogmatists are familiar with only one form of argument, namely, that which reveals the class roots of some form of thinking. Doubtless this is an important element of Marxist criticism, but not the only one, quite apart from the secretarian distortions in

this field. . . . Allow me to mention an instance. When I discussed existentialism in 1947, I tried to deduce its abstract concept of freedom from the ideology of the bourgeois intelligentsia in the French 'Resistance,' from its abstract 'No' to Fascist oppression, and I pointed out that after the liberation, when concrete social problems emerged, existentialism was bound to face a crisis. I noted the beginnings of this crisis in my book, and I believe the later developments have borne me out. Now, in connection with this book, there appeared a review by a well-known Communist writer who accused me of trying to justify this infamous and counter-revolutionary idealism by tracing its roots to the Resistance movement. This is an instance of what happens in our struggle in the international field, and of course also in our internal disputes, by applying that distortion of dialectical materialism which has in recent decades been introduced under the slogan of Party-mindedness. Analysis is eliminated, and its place is taken by empty phrases and unmotivated abuse.

"Lastly, and to sum up, sectarianism always implied that the class war, or the revolution, would sweep away bourgeois philosophy, which was supposed to be collapsing anyhow. It seems to me that in revising this epoch we shall have to apply Lenin's critique of Rosa Luxemburg's economic theory, which suggested that capitalist society would collapse as a matter of economic necessity. Lenin's view was that it would not collapse, but must be overthrown. Today we face a similar situation in the ideological field. Bourgeois ideology is not going to collapse; bourgeois philosophy and bourgeois science have entered upon an ideological crisis, but it is we who must overthrow them. Not with arms lent us by the Red Army, but with the arms of Marxism-Leninism, the arms of true knowledge and understanding."

14

THE LIMITS OF LIBERALISATION *

THE subject-matter of Chapters 14 and 15 being divided between philosophy and religion, it may be useful to begin by recalling that this division is less rigid in the USSR than in most Western countries. Both themes are frequently grouped together by Soviet authors, notably when it is a question of contrasting the official ideology with philosophical "idealism," the latter, according to Lenin, being an offshoot of "fideism," *i.e.*, traditional theology. Nonetheless it would be a mistake to overlook the important distinction drawn by Soviet Marxists between theology and even the most idealist of philosophies, since the former is by definition beyond the pale of rationalist thinking, whereas the latter may yield some criteria for the proper materialist and scientific understanding of the world, *e.g.*, in the shape of the Hegelian dialectic. Hence there is a constant attempt on the part of Soviet writers to come to grips with non-Soviet philosophical thinking—whatever may be thought of the intellectual level at which this confrontation takes place—while in relation to theology there is a complete blank.

In the USSR religion is taken seriously as a socio-political factor, and the churches are subjected to a constant stream of criticism, sociological analysis and generalised political abuse; but there is no serious effort to discuss religious thinking at its own level and in terms proper to its subject. As will be seen from the article contributed to Part Two of this issue by a student of Soviet attitudes towards religion, there has been no change in this respect during the past four decades, although the official line has frequently shifted in regard to the temporal claims of the various churches and religious faiths with which the Soviet régime has come into contact. Religion being "unscientific," it goes without saying that the official attitude towards it can

* Chaps. 14 and 15 first appeared in *Soviet Survey*, 1957, No. 13.

only be determined by pragmatic considerations, such as the need at any given moment to conciliate or repress this or that church or group of believers. For the rest a wearisome repetition of the commonplaces of scientific "enlightenment," proper to the needs of a relatively unsophisticated population, is apparently considered adequate spiritual nourishment for the present generation of Soviet citizens.

The state of affairs in the field of philosophy is of necessity rather more complex, though it is perhaps useful to remind oneself that even before the revolution, Russian thinking tended to concentrate on historical and moral problems which in the West had already been dislodged from philosophy proper. The border-line between philosophy and literature being rather fluid, as befitted a society in process of repeating the secularisation undergone by eighteenth-century France, it was quite in order for Russian thinkers to seek scientific solutions of what were essentially metaphysical problems, while expressing themselves in the idiom of Western (mainly German) philosophy. In this respect there was perhaps not a great deal to choose between writers who consciously stemmed from the Orthodox Church and their "materialist" or "positivist" opponents. Lenin's polemics, in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, are noticeably theological in tone—the *odium theologicum* is in fact so marked as to constitute a permanent embarrassment to Western Marxists. Down to this day, Soviet writers seem unable to tackle a philosophical problem without accusing their opponents of bad faith—or, in the case of Western philosophers, of being in the pay of Wall Street. This polemical tone, reinforced by the authoritarian manner likewise inherited from the Byzantine Church, is not the least among the many obstacles to genuine intellectual intercourse between Soviet propagandists and Western philosophical scholars.

An attempt will be made in the following to describe the changes which have taken place—or failed to take place—in Soviet philosophy (so defined) during the past few months, *i.e.*, since a halt was called to the de-Stalinisation campaign. Before entering upon this subject, however, it may be appropriate to

sketch the development of Soviet Marxism, *i.e.*, Marxism-Leninism, in relation to the basic philosophical issues which the Communist Party inherited from the pre-revolutionary Russian intelligentsia and which to this day constitute the staple of theoretical discussion in the USSR. It will then become clearer why neither the post-Stalin "thaw" nor the more recent efforts to set limits to de-Stalinisation have brought about significant alterations in the manner in which philosophical questions (taking this term in its broadest sense, to encompass the theoretical problems of importance to Soviet ideologists) have been publicly debated in the USSR since at least the early Stalin period.

Dialectical materialism, or "Diamat" for short, is rooted in certain Marxian texts (mainly by Engels) which in the USSR are treated as authoritative and are not subject to critical dissection. This attitude goes back to the founder of Russian Marxism, G. V. Plekhanov, but its most intransigent formulations, as might be expected, are to be found in Lenin's writings, notably *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*.[1] Unlike Kautsky and other German Marxists who tended towards positivism, Lenin was at pains to emphasise the importance of the dialectic, *i.e.*, of the Hegelian element in the Marxism synthesis. In criticising his Menshevik opponents in 1913, he made a point of claiming that they had failed to appreciate "the decisive element in Marxism . . . its revolutionary dialectic."[2] Writing in 1922 to the editors of the newly established theoretical journal, *Pod Znamenem Marksisma* (Under the Banner of Marxism), he urged Communists to study the "Hegelian dialectic" and expressed the hope that the journal would assist the formation of "a kind of society of Marxist friends of the Hegelian dialectic." In subsequent years, this insistence on the importance of the dialectic became part of the official ideology, so much so that Stalin—who clearly had no understanding of what it was all about—thought it proper on suitable occasions to accuse his opponents of being bad dialecticians.[3] The "theoretical" chapter appended to the 1938 *Short Course* of

[1] 1909.
[2] Lenin, *Works*, 1929, 2nd ed., Vol. XVII, p. 30.
[3] *Cf.* his speech at the XVIth Party Congress in 1930, *Problems of Leninism*, Moscow, 1934, 10th ed., p. 427.

Party History (officially attributed to Stalin, though apparently not written by him alone, and now in process of revision) repeats the usual phrases about the central role of the dialectic in Marxist thinking, as does the authoritative *Concise Philosophical Dictionary*. Writing in 1947, its co-editor, M. M. Rozental, described the dialectical method as "the quintessential element in the world outlook of the Marxist-Leninist Party . . ."[4] It is fair to say that on this subject there has been no substantial change since about 1930, when Stalin put an end to genuine discussion by inducing the Central Committee to lay down its own definition of what was, and what was not, the correct interpretation of the Marxian texts.

In view of all this it is noteworthy that by any theoretical standard, Soviet materialism is not really dialectical at all. It is, however, relevant to bear in mind that the pre-Stalinist era had witnessed a good deal of spirited argument over the proper understanding of "dialectical materialism." If present-day Soviet philosophy seems to revolve in a circle, this is only partly a consequence of the limitations inherent in the basic concepts it has inherited. To a large extent the sterility of Soviet philosophical thinking stems from the artificial conditions imposed during the Stalin era. Around 1925 official Soviet philosophy, though committed to Marxism, was not yet committed to Marxism-Leninism; it had not, that is to say, made a fetish of *Diamat*. There were in fact two schools: the "mechanicists," led by Bukharin, who denied the existence of qualitative differences between various levels of existence, and the school of Deborin, who leaned towards an undialectical materialism of the Spinozist kind.[5] Deborin, in the words of a recent writer, "reduced the dialectic to a collection of general abstract principles applicable to every kind of thought."[6] But even this last remnant of the dialectic was effectively removed from the official

[4] Rozental, *The Marxist Dialectical Method*, Moscow, 1947, p. 3.

[5] *Cf.* Gustav A. Wetter, *Der dialektische Materialismus, seine Geschichte und sein System in der Sowjet-Union*, Herder, Freiburg, 1952; particularly pp. 145–235.

[6] Borkenau. "A Thomist on Leninism," *The Twentieth Century*, London, February 1954.

Diamat by Stalin's edict of 1931 which imposed silence upon both schools.

The essentially undialectical character of Soviet *Diamat*, for all the continued official insistence upon dialectical thinking, is a consequence of Lenin's original failure to perceive that the conflict between materialism and idealism, which to him was the pivotal question of philosophy, has only relative importance. Instead of treating both tendencies as the thesis and anti-thesis of a debate whose problems are continually resolved in the process of scientific thinking, he fixed his attitude at a level where it mattered more to him to prove idealism wrong. His followers faithfully continued in his footsteps, except in so far as Deborin sought to escape from the whole issue by suggesting that matter and mind are basically identical. This Spinozist heresy led to his official condemnation, since when Soviet philosophy has remained firmly stuck at a level which strictly speaking is not dialectical at all. By becoming involved in the materialist-idealist controversy, which Kant and Hegel (to say nothing of Marx) had already left behind, Lenin at the outset gave a materialist bias to what he conceived to be the dialectical mode of thought. Thus materialism was able to kill the dialectic and to sterilise Soviet thinking. Once *Diamat* had been officially formulated in 1931, there really was nothing left to discuss—in itself a curious comment on the Soviet claim to have evolved a critical and revolutionary approach.

Matters were not improved when Stalin, in his pamphlet on linguistics,[7] asserted the absence of basic antagonisms in Soviet society, the implicit conclusion being that the Soviet State was able to do away with the contradictions inherent in the historical process. It is noteworthy that the attempts at de-Stalinisation (which in any case seem to have come to at least a temporary halt) stopped short of questioning this extraordinary claim. To do so would have meant raising the most alarming questions as to the stability of Soviet society. It is not surprising that the Soviet philosophers shrank from such an undertaking. The fact remains that they have fought shy of anything in the nature of political heresy, though it is now

[7] 1950.

considered good form to describe as "debatable" Stalin's formulations on the subject of social basis and superstructure. The most recent articulation of mildly critical views in this field [8] is to the effect that in the second section of Chapter IV of his *Short Course*, Stalin failed to mention the "negation of negation" among the "basic laws of dialectical materialism," and gave a "one-sided" formulation to the clash of contradictions and their resolution in a new unity. "Perhaps Stalin had his reasons for his interpretation of these problems," says the writer somewhat disingenuously. If one adds that Stalin's characterisation of Hegel's philosophy as an aristocratic reaction against French materialism is now no longer regarded as adequate,[9] the extent of present-day official liberalism in this field is more or less clearly defined.

Bearing in mind this somewhat unpromising background, it is not surprising that the intellectual "thaw" in the field of philosophy since the XXth Party Congress last year has proved both short-lived and unexciting. At the moment it is even being succeeded by a slight frost.

The high-water mark of officially tolerated nonconformism was reached last autumn with a critical review of the Soviet drama in *Voprosy Filosofii* [10] by two authors, Nazarov and Gridneva, who subsequently came under fire for having propagated various heresies.[11] On the philosophical "front" proper there was even less movement. The same issue of *Voprosy Filosofii*, it is true, opens with a lengthy contribution by Deborin—but on a safely non-philosophical subject, namely "Socialism as a world system" (even so Deborin has been criticised by other writers for laying insufficient stress in this thoroughly conventional piece of writing on co-ordination among the various Communist parties, and on the need to sharpen the fight against bourgeois ideology). An essay by Mankovski on the Marxian categories of "thing" and "relation" makes at least an attempt to enter the theoretical field, although it contributes nothing new. A vaguely troubled analysis of "Matter

[8] *Kommunist*, 1956, No. 17, p. 110.
[9] *Cf.* M. T. Yovchuk, *Voprosy Filosofii*, 1956, No. 5.
[10] 1956, No. 5.
[11] See further below.

and Conscience" (by M. P. Lebedev) makes the not very original point that conscience cannot be reduced to physiological or psychological processes, since its sources are social as well as natural. There follows the Nazarov-Gridneva piece already mentioned, an article on L. I. Mechnikov's struggle against Neo-Malthusianism, and yet another essay on Pavlov. Western philosophy appears in the guise of a brief study of Montaigne. A note on the "problem of the co-existence of different modes of production in the work of F. D. Turner" is safely academic in tone. The issue concludes with a purely factual survey of recent themes set for doctorate candidates in philosophy; again, no issues of any importance are raised.

Where then did the "thaw" manifest itself? From a report in *Voprosy Filosofii* [12] one gathers that a discussion which impinged on certain philosophical themes took place among the members of a philosophical circle at Moscow University, the subject-matter being the emergence of contradictions in the development of socialist society, and their overcoming. Stalin, it will be remembered, had laid it down in his last piece of writing [13] that such contradictions are "non-antagonistic," *i.e.*, capable of being harmonised without serious conflict. The discussion, to judge from *Voprosy Filosofii*, turned largely on a scholastic disputation about "antagonistic" and "non-antagonistic" conflicts, though one or two of the participants came a little closer to the bone by suggesting that in addition to specific problems of growth under socialism there are also general human problems which may give rise to tensions. The general tenor of the debate seems to have been safely orthodox, the main conclusion being to the effect that there are indeed non-antagonistic contradictions (*e.g.*, between growing popular aspirations and limited material or cultural achievements) which need not sharpen to the point of explosion, but can safely await the moment when their gradual solution becomes possible.

At the academic level, the post-Stalin revival of interest in nineteenth-century philosophy has continued unbroken in recent months, though without yielding anything beyond the now

[12] 1956, No. 4.
[13] *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, Moscow, 1952.

established conclusion that German philosophy, and in particular Hegel, has to be studied and must not be ignored. This is a reaction against post-war chauvinism (usually identified with Zhdanov) rather than a new element in Soviet thinking. It is in fact orthodox Leninism. An article by P. N. Galanza [14] makes the familiar point that Hegel must neither be ignored nor overrated. The article is chiefly noteworthy for its extensive quotations from Western journals, *e.g.*, *Logos*, the *Archiv fuer Rechts- und Wirtschaftsphilosophie*, and recent Italian publications. No mention is made, however, of the important studies devoted to the subject of Hegel and Hegelianism by German and French authors in recent years. A critical survey of "Idealist Concepts in Contemporary Bourgeois Philosophy" in the same number of this journal does mention such modern French philosophers as Hyppolite and Jean Wahl (described as neo-Hegelians), but deals in the main with Croce and some more recent Italian writers. The author shows some knowledge of the work of contemporary Western scholars such as S. Marck, Kroner and Karl Popper. His conclusions are safely orthodox: the non-Leninist neo-Hegelians "have nothing in common with genuine dialectics; they either do not understand it, or consciously distort it . . . The neo-Hegelian, existentialist and religious conceptions of the dialectic are . . . an enormous step backward in comparison with Hegel." [15]

If there is little interest in Western philosophy and of course none in theology, science and in particular sociology fare a little better. Judging from a number of contributions to Soviet journals in recent months (some, it is true, by Polish authors, writing before Poland's "October Revolution") Western literature on this subject appears to be available at academic centres in the USSR and the East European countries. The official pre-Gomulka exponent of Polish Marxism, Adam Schaff, was thus able to discuss at some length the "Sociology of Knowledge" of the late Professor Karl Mannheim. *Voprosy Filosofii* [16] has likewise given space to a fairly comprehensive

[14] "Hegel's Views on the State and the Law," *Sovetskoe Gosudarstvo i Pravo*, 1956. No. 9.
[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 130–131.
[16] 1956, No. 5.

review of recent Western literature on the subject (Yu. A. Arbatov, "The Empirical Trend in Contemporary Bourgeois Sociology"). The author appears to have read not only the classics of Western sociology, but such recent writers as Odum, Merton, Bogardus and Ogburn, as well as the *American Sociological Review*, and his studies have led him to the conclusion that "empirical sociology has to be investigated." The investigation turns out, however, to be predetermined by a conviction that bourgeois sociology can at best issue in "reformism." While dealing with the "negative characteristics" of "bourgeois society" (such as alcoholism and prostitution) and on occasion doing so quite realistically, the Western sociologists he quotes, though in some cases "undoubtedly honest men," are "objectively" doing harm by helping their less scrupulous colleagues to disseminate illusions about "popular capitalism" and similar reactionary notions. Yet Soviet sociologists may be able to learn something from their Western colleagues, at any rate in the methodological field, much as Lenin advocated the study of Taylor's methods, while rejecting his industrial sociology (follow some suitable quotations). What then is the "progressive kernel" of Western sociology, corresponding to the "progressive kernel" of Taylorism which Lenin urged upon his followers? Not its theory, of course, since this conflicts with Leninism. But might not "concrete social research" be done on the basis of Leninism, notably in the field of industrial relations? "We have to admit to our regret that our social sciences . . . have for many years neglected such practical research, thus promoting the spread of scholasticism and a divorce from reality." "A critical attitude towards bourgeois sociology is not synonymous with neglect of the spadework (literally 'black labour') performed . . . in relation to concrete problems." In conclusion the author calls for co-operation among Soviet philosophers, economists, legal theorists and the like, in studying the development of the Soviet family, co-operative institutions, and "socialist competition," as well as other phenomena hitherto neglected.

It should perhaps be noted that of late some brief studies have appeared which outwardly at least bear some resemblance

to what in the West is considered sociological research. The latest issue of *Sovetskaya Etnografiya* [17] contains a fairly lengthy study of the "contemporary *kolkhoz* family" by V. I. Kushner (Kishinev), and a survey, contributed by three authors, on the present state of "ethnographic field work." Notwithstanding the limitations imposed by official orthodoxy—an analysis of the Soviet family has to be based on Engels, and the conclusions must invariably sound a positive and optimistic note—this kind of writing does represent an innovation in that it tries to prepare the ground for factual investigation of social conditions in the USSR—hitherto a neglected field. At the theoretical level, emphasis continues to be laid on the refutation of Western sociologists. This is politically safe, since in dealing with such topics as monopolist control in Western capitalism, the Soviet writer need not fear to tread on sensitive corns. Hence the attention devoted to the "unmasking" of such slogans as "people's capitalism," which in truth represent not Western sociology, nor even American sociology, but merely one particular brand of American domestic politics. In pursuing the easy task of demolishing such concepts, Soviet writers do not disdain the help offered by American scholars whose political faith is uncompromisingly democratic. Thus Mr. C. Wright Mills may be praised for attacking the great corporations in his recent book *The Power Elite*,[18] while at the same time his belief that America is basically a democracy is dismissed as politically unsound. "His work shows with irrefutable persuasiveness the real face of American pseudo-democracy, which is really the untrammelled dictatorship of monopoly capitalism." [19] The question how a critical study of this kind comes to be written and published under conditions of "untrammelled dictatorship" is among the many that must remain a puzzle to *Pravda's* readers.

Similar concern with topical questions is shown by the editorial in *Voprosy Filosofii*, 1956, No. 6 (actually published in January, 1957), which begins with a brief criticism of Stalin's shortcomings as a philosopher ("simplification of the relationship

[17] 1956. No. 3.
[18] *Cf. Pravda*, December 21, 1956.
[19] *Ibid.*

between basis and superstructure") and then proceeds almost immediately to the more important subject of "combating the present bourgeois hysteria about Hungary." Here the important admission is made that "bourgeois propagandists have succeeded in planting doubt about the nature of Soviet democracy among our people," a state of affairs reflected, if we are to believe the editorial, among others in the demand that philosophy, including idealist philosophy, be granted freedom from Party control. In urging a sharpening of the struggle against bourgeois views, the editorial voices a complaint against the inactivity of Soviet philosophers in this respect. It is their duty to refute Western criticisms concerning the alleged sterility of *Diamat*. The chief danger is seen to come from the direction of positivism and empiricism. Here again a significant disclosure emerges. "It would be a mistake to suppose that positivist preaching has remained entirely without effect in the USSR." It appears that some Soviet scholars have argued in favour of emancipating science and the universities from compulsory *Diamat*, on the ground that scientific research can get on without it. All such views are described as harmful. Soviet philosophers are likewise urged to refute the "bourgeois slander" that the workers in the USSR are somehow subject to exploitation by the State.

It may be thought characteristic of the inconsistency which marks the present attempt to revive Stalinist orthodoxy that the same number of this journal nonetheless includes a fairly sober exposition of Freud's views (from the Pavlovian standpoint, needless to say). The author—significantly—is an American fellow-traveller. Apparently an article of this kind cannot be written by Soviet scholars—either because they lack the necessary competence or because they do not care to dwell on the subject. A report, also in this number, on the "All-Union co-ordination conference of philosophers" last June discloses the interesting point that philosophy is at present being taught in the USSR without the aid of textbooks, since those in use in former years are being rewritten to take account of the XXth Party Congress' devaluation of Stalin. The conference appears to have listened to a great many speeches on the now familiar subject that Soviet philosophers should (a) refrain from undue

glorification of Stalin, (b) intensify the struggle against all forms of bourgeois ideology. This was the theme-song delivered by P. Fedoseyev and echoed by others. Among the participants in the debate, the well-known psychologist Rubinstein permitted himself a discreet warning against extreme Pavlovism, notably the attempt to do away with concepts not reducible to Pavlov's signal system. The incident is noteworthy, if for no other reason than that it shows once more how comprehensive is the meaning given to the term " philosophy " in the USSR and how dependent all branches of science are on political signals from on high—in this case the need to conform to the pattern set by the XXth Congress.

Mention has been made above of an article published in *Voprosy Filosofii*,[20] by two authors, Nazarov and Gridneva, on the subject of artistic freedom. Since this particular appeal for liberalisation—published just before the Polish-Hungarian upheaval brought about a partial revival of Stalinist attitudes—subsequently became the target for a great many attacks, it may be worth examining the argument in some detail.

The article (" On the Question of the Backwardness of Drama and the Theatre ") undertakes to examine the causes which, in the opinion of the two authors, have brought about a condition of stagnation in the Soviet theatre. Fortified by a great many quotations from Lenin, it raises the question whether the drama, and the arts generally, might not be granted somewhat greater freedom from official control. A Central Committee resolution of 1925 is recalled to underline the suggestion that conditions were different in the pre-Stalin era. The resolution had urged that the Party should " display the greatest tact, caution, and tolerance towards all those literary groups who march with the proletariat . . . The note of literary command should be eliminated from daily usage." Those in fact were the days when only " counter-revolutionary " works of art were banned. In other respects, writers and artists were free to experiment.

The fall from grace, according to the authors, occurred in 1936. In that year an All-Union Committee for Artistic Affairs

[20] 1956, No. 5.

took over control of cultural activities. The first fruits of its reign were witnessed during the subsequent theatrical season, when ten out of nineteen productions planned for 1936–37 had to be removed from the repertory; experimental theatres were liquidated as being "alien to Soviet art"; and Shakespeare disappeared completely from the Soviet scene. These measures were associated with the late A. Shcherbakov, one of Stalin's cronies and the predecessor of Zhdanov in the post of cultural dictator. Shcherbakov, it appears, held that official control over all artistic activities should be imposed from the very start, so as to obviate the necessity of having to scrap plays or films on which the producers had been at work for up to two years. The result was one-man control by bureaucrats. "One man against whom there is no appeal evaluates the work of a company, lays down how the producer should interpret the play, how the actors should act, how the artist should paint the scenery, and how the electrician should switch on the lights."

Nor was the trouble confined to the system of direction. Whereas Lenin in 1923 wisely observed that in cultural matters hasty and sweeping decisions are apt to yield harmful results, this important advice was neglected in subsequent years, notably after 1936 (the beginning of the great purge, although the authors are too discreet to recall this circumstance), when other counsels prevailed. "Consigning these words of Lenin to oblivion, it was thought necessary hastily and sweepingly to extirpate the harmful remnants of formalism. Life, however, has shown that the methods of extirpation have brought nothing but harm to art. . . . No appeals, no matter how desperate, to the theatres to preserve their creative character had any success, nor could they have any, since the Moscow Arts Theatre was declared to be 'the best in the world' . . . Shcherbakov's statement that the demand for the 'extirpation' (of formalism) arose from the increased cultural level of the masses, was completely unfounded. On the contrary, the higher a person's cultural level, the stronger is his desire to analyse everything independently, and the more energetically will he defend his right to evaluate all matters. . . . The establishment of an iron control not only over works of art, but over the very

process of creation, signifies a loss of confidence in the artistic intelligentsia. . . ."

So much for the past. What of the present? The authors are not unduly hopeful. It appears that, just as in former times, certain leading figures (unnamed), trusting to their intuitive understanding of these matters, impose their private standards upon the various fields of cultural activity, exercise the right to veto artistic creations, display indifference to public opinion, and confidently proclaim their own opinion the only correct one. "Even now, confidence in the artistic intelligentsia has not been fully restored. As in the past, it is only the officials of government departments, among whom there are numerous time-servers (literally 'reinsurers') who enjoy full confidence. It is true that of late there has been a slight change —theatres have been given the right to draw up their own repertory plans, and these have become more interesting, but unfortunately this still applies only to the classics and not to works on contemporary subjects. . . . Experience shows that in the spheres of literature and the arts, self-administration best assures the implementing of the Leninist demand for less guidance and more practical work. Clearly it would be expedient to remove artistic problems from the control of the Ministry of Culture, and to form an Academy of Art, or even of Literature and the Arts."

To say that these suggestions have not found favour in official quarters would be an understatement. They have in fact become the target not merely of isolated rebukes, but of a sustained attempt to discredit the whole liberalisation campaign. Starting with attacks in *Pravda* and *Izvestia*,[21] in *Pravda* once more,[22] in *Kommunist*,[23] in *Voprosy Filosofii*,[24] in speeches by Mikhailov, the "Minister of Culture," and by V. Molotov himself, the two authors have drawn upon themselves the sustained wrath of Party officialdom. To quote from the article in *Kommunist*, whose tenor may serve to indicate the prevailing atmosphere, "it is not mere criticism when the defects of past

[21] November 25, 1956.
[22] December 26, 1956.
[23] 1956, No. 15.
[24] 1956, Nos. 5 and 6.

years are utilised for stupid attempts to show that Party leadership and State leadership in the arts are unnecessary . . . the advocacy of spontaneity by Nazarov and Gridneva leads towards a retreat from the ideological positions of socialist realism . . . it would lay our arts open to alien influences." "The Communist Party is a party of the people, its most advanced part, its vanguard, and this gives it the high moral right to direct the process of formation of the most advanced art." "Any statement suggesting that socialist realism fetters the artist is based either on a failure to understand it, or on deliberate distortion of the facts . . . For our artists, Party direction is not an extraneous factor exerting 'pressure' but a natural atmosphere of life."

Since the heretical article had originally appeared in *Voprosy Filosofii*, it was to be expected that the editors would be called upon to confess their error. This they did in No. 6, 1956, expressing regret for having published such a wrongheaded contribution and warning their readers to keep ideological discussions to a minimum, since there was always the danger of their being exploited by international reaction. *Pravda* [25] had already struck this note: "It would be a mistake to think that bourgeois propaganda does not influence the minds of Soviet people, notably those of the youth. Some comrades have misinterpreted the recent changes in the Party line. . . . In the present circumstances, imperialist reaction mobilises the whole arsenal of lies and calumny for a fresh crusade against the Marxist-Leninist world view. The reactionary press is full of lying phrases about a so-called national Communism, with the sole aim of misleading the labouring masses. Under the influence of this propaganda, and from an unwillingness or inability correctly to analyse current events, some wavering elements are abandoning Marxism-Leninism or trying to revise it." In this connection, *Pravda* also had something to say about certain people in Eastern Europe who were trying to jettison such basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism as the dictatorship of the proletariat, the leading role of the Party, etc.

[25] December 26.

From here to the formal reinstatement of Stalin as an outstanding exponent of Marxism-Leninism there was only a step, and the step was in fact taken even before Khrushchev placed the seal on the new orientation with his widely reported appeal to the deity to make all Communists behave like Stalin. Already a week before this event, on January 12, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* had informed its readers (in an article headlined "How do we understand proletarian internationalism?") that Stalin was the outstanding Leninist of his generation: "There never has been any 'Stalinism' in the Communist parties. All these parties develop and act in accordance with the immutable principles of Marxism-Leninism. J. V. Stalin, too, was one of the outstanding Marxists." The same refrain was sung with even greater energy by A. Rumyantsev, editor of *Kommunist*, in a lengthy reply to certain theoretical propositions put forward on behalf of Yugoslav Communism by Edward Kardelj.[26]

Strictly speaking, this particular controversy is not connected with Soviet philosophy, but the Soviet propagandists have a way of linking all their public disagreements with opponents to the Leninist framework of ideas, and Rumyantsev's onslaught on Kardelj is no exception. Taking as his text the abridged version of Kardelj's speech published in *Kommunist* (in itself something of an innovation), Rumyantsev starts with a thoroughly Stalinist interpretation of the Hungarian revolution (a reactionary uprising, directed by Western agents) and proceeds via a reaffirmation of the doctrine of "two camps" to an attack on Kardelj's demand for democratisation. In blunt language the Yugoslavs are informed that their criticisms of "Stalinism" and their demand for greater freedom during the "transitional period" (*i.e.*, the change-over from capitalism to socialism) are demagogic. The authority of the Party leadership must not be weakened, and Kardelj's observations on this subject are likened to those of the "Workers' Opposition" in 1921, which were "decisively defeated" by Lenin. Some of his views are stated to go back to Proudhon rather than Marx. There is no room

[26] "Socialist Realities and the 'Theory' of E. Kardelj," *Kommunist*, 1956, No. 18, published in January, 1957.

for decentralisation, as urged by the revisionists. The dictatorship of the proletariat will not wither away before a decisive victory has been gained in the international field. Furthermore, there is no State capitalism in the USSR, no bureaucratic rule. and it is nonsense to assert that the workers are exploited by the State. Rumyantsev does not exclude the possibility that Yugoslavia may make a contribution to socialism, but he sees little sign of such a development. The Yugoslavs are reminded that economically they have not in recent years made much progress. Lastly, they are warned against making too much of national differences. By way of underlining his own fidelity to Soviet orthodoxy, Rumyantsev chooses to couch his polemical onslaught in the familiar style of the Stalin epoch, down to the laboured sarcasms with which the Leader used to overwhelm his opponents ("Kardelj's 'theory,' if that is the right word . . ." etc.).

It would appear from the foregoing survey of Soviet developments during the past quarter that there are two conflicting tendencies at work among the spokesmen of the régime. On the one hand, the Party leadership—clearly shaken by last autumn's events in Poland and Hungary, and possibly disturbed by the impact of Khrushchev's original revelations about Stalin's rule on the minds of the younger generation—has been trying to set the clock back. On the other hand, the processes set in train by the XXth Congress have their own automatism, as shown by the laborious rewriting of textbooks which is now going on, and the consequent lack of authoritative documents on which to fall back. Also, the virtual abandonment of the more reckless manifestations of Zhdanovist chauvinism and isolationism has made it possible for the Soviet intelligentsia to resume contact with some aspects of Western thinking. The immediate outcome of this contradictory development is twofold: while the Party propagandists have been let loose and are trying to revive the atmosphere of the cold war, the academic philosophers, sociologists, and educators are marking time. It is now possible for them to engage in anti-Western polemics without necessarily having to descend to Zhdanovist forms of abuse and misrepresentation, and on the whole they are doing so. In effect this amounts to a revival of the mental atmosphere characteristic of

the early Stalin period, when Leninist orthodoxy was safely installed, but Stalin's every word had not yet become gospel.

If held within these limitations, the current revival of Stalinist attitudes seems likely to come up against the problems posed by Poland's and Yugoslavia's evolution beyond the Stalinist framework. At the intellectual level, this necessitates at the very least a confrontation with "national Communism" of the Gomulkist variety. A full return to the ice age, on the other hand, would of necessity bar the way to any discussion—however limited in substance and offensive in tone—with such representatives of non-Russian Communism as Kardelj and Gomulka. There is no indication that a decision has been made as between these alternatives.

From the purely philosophical standpoint, "national Communism" of the Eastern European variety presents no great problem, since virtually all East European Communists are Leninists; they share, that is to say, Lenin's basic allegiance to "materialism" as understood by the Russian intellectuals of his generation. The resultant official ideology is philosophically sterile, one-sided, and not particularly interesting, but not in itself a barrier to scientific research—provided scientists are allowed to escape with lip-service to it. This on the whole they seem to be doing. The real difficulty arises in the sphere of socio-political thinking, since here the régime inhibits genuine criticism through its all-pervading system of official make-believe. The partial collapse of this Orwellian atmosphere in present-day Poland is therefore a danger for the neo-Stalinist leaders in the USSR, although it is one which for other reasons they may have to tolerate. It remains to be seen whether Polish influences will in time help to "unfreeze" the Soviet atmosphere, now that the "thaw" caused by Stalin's death has evidently come to an end. For the moment, all genuine discussion appears barred by the régime's evident determination to restore the Party's shaken hold over the minds of Soviet citizens. The partial return to Stalinist attitudes is to be understood as an element in this attempt at self-preservation.

15

THE SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARDS RELIGION

By Walter Kolarz

THE Communist attitude towards religion suffers from over-simplification. Even at its best, on a scholarly and intellectual level, the Marxist-Leninist analysis of religious problems is flat and superficial. It is concerned with an outright rejection of the entire spiritual world and not with an attempt to understand it. Soviet anti-religious propaganda forecasts that religion will die out. Religion, it holds, originates and exists at certain levels of human development. In a socialist society it will gradually disappear and people will embrace a scientific world-outlook instead.[1] The Communist Party in consequence poses as the self-appointed champion of science against prejudices and superstitions. It cannot be neutral towards religion " because it stands for science and religion is against science." [2] The emptiness of this claim is obvious, for the Communist Party has not lent its support to real science and scholarship, but only to a system of pseudo-scientific concepts serving its political ends.

Yet the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party seems to have initiated a period in which anti-religious propaganda is being sacrificed to the need for a united front in which religious believers are to play a part. Shepilov said in his Congress speech:

> Communists are in principle opposed to sectarian narrow-mindedness and limitations. . . . In the struggle against social oppression and against colonialism, in the struggle for peace and democracy, the great aspirations of all the oppressed

[1] P. A. Pavelkin, *The Contradiction between the Scientific and the Religious World Outlook*, Moscow, 1955, p. 21.

[2] P. F. Kolonitsky, *What is Religion?* Moscow, 1955, pp. 21–22.

> people, whether of the Arab, Asian or Latin-American countries, and of all the working people, *whether Catholics or Protestants, Buddhists or Moslems,* will find their fulfilment.[3]

In the interest of the advance of Communism, an attitude of neutrality, if not benevolence, towards religion seems likely to be adopted. The tactics of neutrality cannot, however, be applicable to Russia itself, as long as the Soviet rulers abide by the concept of a new totalitarian Soviet man. That concept has added new empirically developed elements to the original anti-religious ideology of Soviet Communism, which goes back to Lenin and indeed to Marx and Engels. The Soviet State claims man in his entirety for this world. His adherence to religious creeds, his recognition of a supreme being and belief in another world imply, from the Soviet point of view, a divided loyalty. Communist totalitarianism would only be complete if all subjects of the totalitarian State turned away from religion.

The Soviet Communist attitude towards Christianity is, as it were, negative at all stages, namely, from its origin to the present time. According to Soviet theory, Christianity came into being as a movement of the oppressed, the slaves, and the poor. In a way Jesus Christ was a successor of Spartacus. Having lost their fight against oppression on earth, the slaves of the Roman Empire created the myth of a divine avenger.[4] This does not mean that the movement of slaves linked with the name of Christ was " progressive " even at the start. On the contrary, denial of the progressive character of early Christianity has become a Communist dogma. It is one of the Communist charges levelled against Karl Kautsky, veteran Social Democratic theoretician and Lenin's special *bête noire,* that he propagated the " reactionary anti-Marxist concept of the revolutionary character of early Christianity." [5] Christianity, the Soviet anti-religious propagandists assert, " even at the dawn of its history diverted the popular masses from any effective struggle for liberation." [6]

[3] *Pravda.* February 17, 1956.
[4] *Cf.* Rozental, *Christianity, its origin and essence.* Moscow, 1955, p. 5.
[5] Malinin, *On the Origin of Religion,* Moscow, 1955, p. 36.
[6] Rozental, *op. cit.,* p. 8.

Soviet historians describe Jesus Christ as a mythical figure. A standard textbook for secondary schools contains this typical passage:

> In that legend there is not a word of truth. In reality, no Jesus Christ has ever existed. Not a word about Christ is said in any historical work of the first century of our era. The myth about him was invented on the pattern of other Oriental myths.[7]

The synoptic gospels which, in the view of Christian authorities, originated well within the first century, are not accepted by Soviet scholars as evidence of the historicity of Christ. They attribute them to a later period, the favourite explanation being that they were written by "Christian leaders" after the unsuccessful rising of Bar Kochba (A.D. 132–135) in an attempt to establish a dividing line between the "new religion" and the politically compromised Judaism.[8] The gospels are also combed through for "class elements," and Professor Vipper arrives at the conclusion that the Christianity of the gospels was no longer identical with the movement of the slaves and the poor. This was shown by the particular attention which the synoptic gospels devoted to the "publicans," and also by the fact that most parables of the gospel of St. Luke "were taken from the life of the big slave-owning households of Antiquity and Christianity."[9] The letters of St. Paul (whose historicity is equally denied) are noted for their "social conservatism," and only the Revelation of St. John is considered in a more favourable light. Engels had commended it as being different from other parts of the New Testament, since it was full of a spirit of sound and honest revenge against the persecutors of Christianity. This statement is quoted approvingly by the Soviet experts on early Christianity, but it is added that even the Revelation of St. John fails to stress "the necessity of violent action," and rests its hope on a divine redeemer.[10]

[7] S. I. Kovalev, *History of the Ancient World*, Moscow, 1954, p. 165.
[8] Rozental, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
[9] *Voprosy Istorii*, 1934, No. 9, pp. 43–46.
[10] Rozental, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

The Communist picture of early Christianity is confused and contradictory. As so often, Soviet scholars and propagandists try to prove too many things at the same time. While some want to show that Christianity was a subversive anti-Roman movement which at an early stage changed its character, others try to demonstrate that it was from the beginning a "cosmopolitan ideology" intended to hold together the Imperium Romanum. This view is defended by Professor Gagarin, holder of the Chair of Historical and Dialectical Materialism at Moscow University. "The interests of the political unity of the Imperium," says Gagarin, "demanded the creation of a monotheistic religion instead of polytheism." He does not deny that the early Christians were persecuted by the Roman Empire, but suggests that persecution was confined only to certain radical sects.[11] If there is still some doubt about the character of Christianity until the third century—some Soviet scholars think that until then the Church was "democratic"—such doubts no longer exist with regard to the Christianity of the subsequent periods, when it is invariably connected with slavery, serfdom, and feudal or capitalist exploitation. As Communism looks at religious movements not in search of theological concepts but only with the purpose of dissecting them sociologically, it gives favourable consideration to so-called democratic trends which emerged on the periphery of the Church (*e.g.*, Montanists, Manichaeans, Donatists and Paulicians), but often questioned the principles and teachings on which orthodox Christianity was based.[11a]

During the years of Soviet power there has been a clear shift in the emphasis of anti-Christian propaganda. In the early period that propaganda consisted mainly of vulgar abuse of the gospels, the saints and the Church. Its instruments were crude posters and cartoons, and the well-known anti-religious poems of Demyan Bedny, once a kind of court poet of the Kremlin. After the middle of the thirties the main stress was put on pseudo-scholarly argumentation. The turning point was a statement by

[11] Gagarin, "Origin and Class Essence of Early Christianity," *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta*, 1953, No. 7.

[11a] Rozental, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

the Central Committee in November, 1936, to the effect that the Christianisation of Russia was an act of historical progress. The statement closed an era of violent but ineffective anti-religious propaganda excesses. Yet Soviet hostility towards Christianity has outlived all tactical switches of policy, including those emerging from the Twentieth Congress. An anti-religious pamphlet published in December, 1956, charges the "contemporary imperialist bourgeoisie" with attempting to use the "myth of Christ" "to consolidate the rotten rule of capital" and "to divert the masses from fighting for their rights." [12] The same pamphlet asserts that Christian teaching serves the imperialist camp "for its aggressive aims, anti-Soviet slander and propaganda for a new war." [13] It would appear from such crude remarks that Soviet understanding of Christianity has made no progress during the four decades in which anti-religious propaganda has been conducted in the USSR.

The Roman Catholic Church is not of major importance as a spiritual and ecclesiastical factor inside the Soviet Union. Catholicism is the majority religion in one Soviet Republic only (Lithuania) and a minority religion in two Republics (Latvia and Byelorussia). From the vast territory of Russia proper, where the Catholic Church had dozens of houses of worship in Tsarist times, it has been virtually eliminated. Soviet writers therefore consider the Catholic Church not so much a factor on the home front as an international force. They have indeed always looked upon the Catholic Church, and especially the Pope, as leaders of the Western religious world. This has made them particularly sensitive towards every authoritative pronouncement from the See of Rome and every move which the Vatican has made on the international chessboard.

Since the Catholic world is, from the point of view of the Soviet State, an external factor rather than an internal one, the Soviet attitude towards Catholicism has shifted in accordance with the requirements of world strategy. Until the end of the thirties, the Party line towards Catholicism was one of irreconcilable hostility, but a hostility with which was mingled a certain

[12] K. L. Voropaeva, *Did Christ exist?* Moscow, 1956, p. 30.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

grudging respect. Bukharin, the outstanding theoretician of the early period of the Soviet régime, at the Second Congress of the League of Militant Godless in 1928, warned against underrating the power of the Vatican. " Before we can catch up with and overtake the Roman Pope, we must catch up with and overtake our little popes (popiki)." [14] In other words, the League of Militant Godless could not expect to inflict a decisive blow on the Catholic Church in the international arena before it had defeated the lesser enemy, namely, Orthodoxy, at home in Russia. A day of prayer to which the Pope called the faithful in March, 1930, was again used by Soviet propaganda to warn against the power of world Catholicism. This is how an editorial in *Izvestia* commented on it: " The idiots and simpletons who underrate the political significance of the most reactionary force of present capitalist society have received an object lesson. . . . The Catholic Church is a powerful motor capable of inducing journalists to write, politicians to deliver speeches, and organisers to go into action." [15]

There were two distinct periods during Stalin's reign when Soviet Russia and world Communism seemed to embark on an apparent policy of appeasement towards the Catholic Church. The first of these attempts was launched, not by any Soviet leader, but by Maurice Thorez, whose tactical moves during Stalin's lifetime always reflected the Kremlin's intentions most accurately. Thorez made his first appeasement offer to the Catholics in a radio speech of April 17, 1936.[16] It was such a novelty in Communist policy that approval for it must have been sought from the highest Moscow quarters. At first the appeal—it became known as *la politique de la main tendue*—appeared to be directed to certain categories among Catholic believers, in the first place the industrial workers. But in the latter half of 1936, and especially in 1937, the new line was pursued with great vigour and with ever-increasing ambition. The French Communists were then eager to obtain the support of the parochial clergy, if not the benevolence of the episcopate.

[14] *Pravda*, June 12, 1928.
[15] *Izvestia*, March 27, 1930.
[16] Maurice Thorez, *Oeuvres*, Vol. XI, p. 203.

Thorez paid tribute to the culture of the Middle Ages and quoted approvingly from the Papal Encyclicals. "The Union between Catholics and Communists," said Thorez in October, 1937, in his most elaborate statement on the subject of *la main tendue*, "is necessary, is possible, and is on the way to realisation. It only requires mutual goodwill and a spirit of tolerance." [17] However, the campaign for Communist-Catholic co-operation broke down. The fact that it coincided with the extermination of the remnants of organised Catholic church life in Russia showed its demagogic nature.

In the second attempt at appeasement, Stalin himself took the initiative. In the spring of 1944, the Soviet army prepared for the invasion of Poland, and the occupation of other countries, entirely or largely Catholic, was in sight. In this situation "Stalin thought it opportune to obtain the goodwill of the Catholic masses and even the neutrality of the Vatican." With these aims in view he tried to use a "sincere but muddled and inexperienced Polish priest," Father Stanislaus Orlemansky.[18] Father Orlemansky, an American citizen of Polish descent, came to Moscow on an official invitation, and early in May, 1944, had two talks with Stalin. At the end of these talks he stated: "Future events will prove that Stalin is very friendly towards the Roman Catholic Church." [19] Future events proved the exact opposite. The Catholic Church of the Byzantine Rite was completely destroyed in the Soviet Union itself, as well as in Rumania and Czechoslovakia, while the Catholic Church of the Latin Rite was subjected to vexations and persecutions in all countries under Soviet control, from Lithuania to Albania. Ideologically, Catholicism remained the chief enemy on the religious front and the number of anti-religious books and pamphlets directed against the Catholic community is larger than that devoted to all other religions put together. Soviet propaganda always identifies the Catholic Church with the main political enemy of the moment. During the war it was denounced as an ally of the Axis powers,

[17] Thorez, *Oeuvres*, Vol. XIV, p. 180.
[18] Robert Magidoff, *The Kremlin versus the People*, New York, 1953, p. 81.
[19] *Soviet Monitor*, No. 4622, May 6, 1944.

and after the war as a "servant of American imperialism." [20] The Church is also denounced for alleged collusion with the "right-wing socialists." "These enemies of socialism have entered into agreement even with the Vatican to rescue the capitalist order by joint efforts." [21]

A less conventional way of attacking the Vatican consists in pandering to pre-Communist Russian prejudices and denouncing Catholicism as the hereditary enemy of the Russian people. The following quotation from a Soviet history of the Order of the Jesuits is characteristic in this respect: "For nearly 1,000 years there has never been any lack of words about the love of the Pope for the Russian people, but behind this have been hidden all sorts of intrigues, plans for military expeditions, dreams of conquering, robbing, and exterminating the Russian people, and at times Russian blood was indeed shed by arms blessed by the Vatican." [22]

Soviet anti-religious propagandists conduct the struggle against the Catholic Church not only from Marxist-Leninist positions, but also with the intention of fomenting trouble between the Eastern (Orthodox) and the Western (Catholic) Church. Hence their endeavour to supply to the Orthodox Church "anti-Vatican material" of a Russian-national character. These attempts have not been without a certain success. The *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* has repeatedly quoted with approval the works of M. M. Sheinman, one of the most prolific anti-Catholic pamphleteers.[23]

The return to "popular front" tactics before, and especially after the Twentieth Congress seems to have outdated the more violent anti-Vatican statements, and the recent Church-State agreement in Poland, which Moscow cannot openly challenge, may act, at least temporarily, as a brake on the anti-Catholic campaign.

[20] M. M. Sheinman, *The Vatican during the Second World War,* Moscow, 1951, p. 346.

[21] *Ibid.* p. 17.

[22] D. E. Mikhnevich, *Essays on the History of Catholic Reaction (Jesuits)*, Moscow, Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, 1953, p. 196.

[23] *e.g.*, 1949, No. 9, pp. 44, 46, 48; 1950, No. 3, p. 60.

The deep theological cleavage between Catholics and Protestants has been a matter of indifference to the more popular Soviet anti-religious propagandists. For them Protestant pastors and Catholic priests were almost one and the same thing: they were both servants of foreign religions, and treasonable contact with foreign Powers could, therefore, easily be imputed to them. The priests were usually charged with spying for Poland, while the pastors were denounced as German or Finnish agents. A typical wholesale accusation against priests and pastors was made by Fedor Oleshchuk, one of the leading Soviet anti-religious propagandists, when he said: " In 1937 the organs of the NKVD uncovered and destroyed quite a number of spy nests which were directed by saintly priests and pastors. Under the cover of the cross and their cassocks, many servants of God turned out to be spies and intelligence agents of foreign countries. Many of them organised diversionist bands for the blowing up of factories, the destruction of bridges and railway lines, the disintegration of collective farms, etc. Such is the political face of the Catholic and Protestant clergy in the USSR." [24]

This quotation marks the lowest level of Soviet anti-religious propaganda. On the higher levels a distinction is made between Catholics and Protestants,, and the various reformation movements are scrutinised from the Marxist point of view and given good or bad marks in accordance with their class content. Hus has received an unequivocally positive assessment. He is " the great Czech patriot " and " fighter against Catholic obscurantism " [25] and the " founder of a genuine national-popular heretical movement." [26] At the other extreme there is Calvin, whose teachings are defined as a " religious justification of bourgeois accumulation of capital and bourgeois activity in general." [27] Luther is reproached with having invented a new kind of spiritual slavery. This assessment goes back to Marx himself, whose verdict on Luther is quoted in a newly published Marx-Engels anti-religious symposium. " Luther," said Marx, " conquered

[24] F. Oleshchuk, *The fight of the Church against the People*, Moscow, 1939, p. 55.
[25] B. T. Rubtsov, *The Hussite Wars*, Moscow, 1955, pp. 3, 85.
[26] *Ibid.* p. 118.
[27] *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, vol. 19, 1953, p. 459.

slavery based on piety by replacing it with slavery based on conviction. He destroyed faith in authority by re-establishing the authority of faith. He transformed priests into laymen while transforming at the same time laymen into priests. He freed man from external religion, but made religion the inner world of man. He emancipated the body from fetters, but put fetters on the human heart." [28] Soviet scholars do not, of course, express themselves in such a sophisticated way as Marx. For them Luther's Reformation was simply an " all-national movement for the liberation of Germany from the alien yoke " of papal Rome.[29] However, Luther did not want the movement to go beyond a purely religious framework. He refused to make it the basis of social and political transformation. Ultimately he went over to the side of the princes and this was " nothing else but an act of betrayal of the all-national cause by the conservative majority of the bourgeoisie." [30] In Thomas Muenzer the Communists see a German reformer who is more to their liking: he is the " leader and ideologist of the peasant-plebeian " camp at the time of the Reformation. Unlike Luther he stands for an " anti-feudal revolution " and his theological views approach an atheistic position.[31] In short, Muenzer's is a " people's reformation " and Luther's a " bourgeois reformation."

As even the most " scholarly " anti-religious propagandists know little about Christian theology and the differences between the various denominations, their notions about religious developments outside the USSR are, to say the least, schematic and naive. The crisis of the Western world, according to the current view, has led on the one hand to the unification of the Protestant groups and on the other to a rapprochement between Protestantism and Catholicism. The Oecumenical movement organised in the World Council of Churches is " directed against the USSR and the countries of popular democracy." [32] It is a " manifestation of religious cosmopolitanism " and it signifies

[28] *Karl Marx and F. Engels on Religion*, Moscow, 1955, p. 37.
[29] M. M. Smirin, *Voprosy Istorii*, 1954, p. 76.
[30] *Ibid.* p. 77.
[31] *Encyclopedia*, vol. 19, 1954, pp. 643–644.
[32] *Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, 1950, p. 394.

the "creation of a united religious front against the camp of peace, socialism, and democracy." [33]

As to the rapprochement between Protestantism and Catholicism, this is due to the fact that the bourgeoisie is becoming increasingly reactionary. In the period of imperialism, says Sheinman, it no longer has any use for liberalism even in the religious sphere [34] and therefore adopts the Catholic position with regard to faith and liturgy. Protestant Churches are copying from Catholicism what they previously rejected as superstition and paganism because they believe that in doing so they can better fight materialism and Communism.[35] All this is said in an almost reproachful tone, as if the propagandist were accusing the Protestants of betraying the Reformation for the sake of anti-Communism.

One can hardly expect Soviet propagandists to appreciate the intricacies of the theological position of the Anglican Church between Protestantism and Catholicism, but they do show some interest in its institutional side, which they have attacked at times as fiercely as the Vatican. "The ecclesiastical apparatus (of the Anglican Church)," says the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, "supports all the most reactionary measures of British imperialism both in home and foreign policy." "The Anglican Church is actively engaged in missionary work in the interest of the colonial robbery of the English bourgeoisie." [36] However, Evgeni Varga, who in his standard work on the economics and politics of imperialism has a special chapter on religion, is of the opinion that the Anglican Church conducts a "very subtle reactionary policy." This subtlety consists in talking of "social justice" and in establishing close contact with the Labour Party.[37]

In the struggle against the Russian Orthodox Church, Soviet Communism sharpened its weapons and worked out its tactics

[33] S. A. Chervinsky, "The Worldwide Union of Protestant Churches," *Voprosy Istorii, Religii i Ateizma*, vol. 2, Moscow, 1954, pp. 102–104.

[34] M. M. Sheinman, *Religion in the Period of Imperialism*, Moscow, 1955, p. 14.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[36] *Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, 1950, p. 364.

[37] E. Varga, *Fundamental Questions of the Economics and Politics of Imperialism*, Moscow, 1953, p. 474.

on the "religious front." Anti-Christmas and anti-Easter campaigns, those characteristic features of religious persecution in the early period of Soviet power, were directed in the first place against Orthodox Christianity. But between 1941 and 1943 a significant change occurred, a change which concerned the position of the Russian Orthodox Church as an institution, but not its religious basis. The attitude towards the institution was revised because, from the official point of view, the character of the Orthodox Church had changed. The Orthodox Church could no longer be considered as serving the class enemy because the enemy classes had disappeared. In official circles it was thought preferable, especially at a time of war, to recognise the Church as a patriotic and pro-Soviet force rather than to reiterate outdated charges referring to its alleged counter-revolutionary tendencies. "The Russian Orthodox Church," said an anti-religious author, "together with all other toilers of the USSR, was engaged in the fight against German fascism and for the victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War." [38] Soviet writers have also paid tribute to the participation of the Orthodox Church in the Soviet-sponsored peace campaign. At the Peace Conference of the Churches held in the Troitse Sergeyeva Monastery in Zagorsk in May, 1952, Nikolay Tikhonov, Chairman of the Soviet Peace Committee, said that the Churches were making "a great contribution to the defence of peace," and added that numerous servants of the Church preached the idea of the defence of peace "zealously and tirelessly" in their sermons.[39]

However, there is a very considerable difference between the way in which the Russian Orthodox Church itself considers its patriotic role and what is officially conceded to it. The Church looks upon itself as a kind of permanent national institution operating throughout the centuries, while from the Soviet point of view its patriotic role is confined to a short period under Soviet rule. In fact, anti-religious propaganda of the post-Stalin period still makes the point that the Church has in the past been

[38] P. Kashirin, *The Reactionary Essence of Religious Ideology*, Moscow, 1951, p. 28.

[39] *Conference in Defence of Peace of all Churches and Religious Associations in the USSR, Documents and Materials*, Moscow, 1952, pp. 105–106.

anti-national in a dual sense, namely, by assisting the suppression of popular risings and by supporting foreign invaders such as the Tartar Khans and the Polish intervention of 1606. No doubt these matters are brought up again with the special purpose of counteracting the Church's patriotic claims.[40]

The patriotism of the Church is, of course, only a side-issue both from the religious and the Communist point of view. It has acquired importance only because it has prompted a more tolerant and opportunistic attitude towards the Church. On the ideological level the Communist attitude towards the Russian Orthodoxy remains unchanged. Soviet anti-religious propagandists stress consistently that ecclesiastical loyalty cannot affect the main issue. From this assessment there results the current equivocal co-existence between anti-religious propaganda and Church-State co-operation in non-religious matters.

However, the Soviet outlook on Orthodoxy cannot be determined only by the relations of the Soviet régime with the two Orthodox Churches existing on the territory of the USSR —the Russian Orthodox Church and the Georgian Orthodox Church. There are as many as thirteen Autocephalous Orthodox Churches outside the USSR, and Moscow judges each of them by its degree of friendliness towards the Soviet system and the objectives of Soviet diplomacy. The Orthodox Churches of the satellite countries "support the new social and political order there," as G. G. Karpov, a Soviet official and Head of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church, recognised.[41] There are, it is true, differences in the extent of their subservience to the régime. Among the leaders of the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches of the satellite countries, Patriarch Justinian of Rumania has the reputation of being the staunchest supporter. The special position of the Churches of Poland and Czechoslovakia also deserves to be mentioned. They are formally "autocephalous" but have Russian bishops at their head and are, therefore, particularly closely linked with the Moscow Patriarchate. The Russian Orthodox Metropolitan

[40] A. M. Samsonov, *Anti-feudal Popular Risings and the Church*, Moscow, 1955, pp. 16, 60.

[41] *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, Special Number, 1948, p. 12.

of Warsaw, Makarios, has been nicknamed " the ecclesiastic Rokossovsky," because he was imposed under similar circumstances on the Orthodox faithful as was the Marshal of the Polish Army.

The Soviet attitude towards religious Judaism is complicated by the dual character of the Jewish problem in Russia. It is usually only the national aspect of the problem, and not the religious, which receives attention, and a standard work has been written on the Jews in the Soviet Union in which the fate of religious Judaism is treated as a minor matter. However, much of the national oppression to which Soviet Jewry has been exposed is rooted in the official appreciation of Judaism as a reactionary religious force. Lenin himself described the demand for Jewish national culture as a " slogan of rabbis and bourgeois," meaning that he attached to it no predominantly religious significance.[41a] Moreover, the existence of a world-wide religious Judaism identical in the essentials of its creed is in itself a reflection on the Communist approach towards the Jewish problem, since it denies the Soviet thesis that the term " Jews " is simply a collective noun for various nationalities tracing their origin back to the ancient Hebrews.[42]

According to the theory expounded in the standard Soviet work of reference, Jewish monotheism was invented by the " prophets " to endow the Jews with a kind of religious exclusiveness and so to silence the class-contradictions in their midst. Whilst attacking the rich, the " prophets " failed to call for a real fight against social injustice. Their appeals to wait for the arrival of the Messiah were intended to put a brake on the activity of the exploited lower classes.[43] Nearer to our time, in the " period of capitalism and imperialism," Judaism was kept alive artificially by the bourgeoisie " with the aim of diverting the toiling Jews from the fight against both Jewish and non-Jewish exploiters." [44] Under Soviet rule, Judaism is denounced as a " counter-revolutionary force " and considerable efforts have been made to undermine the authority of the rabbis both as

[41a] Lenin, *Sochineniya*, vol. 20, p. 9.
[42] *Encyclopedia*, vol. 15, 1952, p. 377.
[43] *Ibid.* vol. 19, 1953, pp. 157–158.
[44] *Ibid.* p. 158.

exponents of religious Judaism and as Jewish community leaders.

Soviet anti-religious propaganda and action combined with certain other factors—the disintegration of Jewish community life through the structural reforms of the Soviet régime; the increasing concentration of Soviet Jewry in the big cities; the Nazi massacres and the Soviet resettlement actions—to make religious Judaism in Russia "moribund." There are now only "battered remnants of what was once a great religious community."[45] In these circumstances, there seems to be little point in continuing with an anti-religious campaign. After the war, the fight against Judaism was conducted almost exclusively on the political front against Jewish "bourgeois nationalism" and Zionism. In most anti-religious pamphlets of the post-war period the Jewish religion is not even mentioned. But silence as an anti-religious weapon can go very far. Thus the history of ancient Israel has been deleted from Soviet school textbooks. "Deleted" is the right word, for a textbook by Professor Mishulin, in use in 1946 and shortly after, still devoted two-and-a-half pages to ancient Israel and Judea,[46] while the new textbook by Kovalev with the same title, published in 1954, completely dispenses with ancient Jewry. It even manages to avoid any reference to the Jews when explaining the emergence of Christianity.

The Soviet campaign against Zionism is nonetheless largely waged with the help of anti-religious slogans. The Jewish national home in Palestine was from the start denounced as a bulwark of Jewish clericalism. "The power of the rabbis suppresses every expression of free thought," said the standard textbook of Soviet atheism of the pre-war period.[47] Similar assertions about the power of the rabbis are still made in Soviet attacks on the State of Israel. "Religion has great political influence in the State of Israel," says a recent anti-religious pamphlet disapprovingly.[48] Such statements are perhaps not so

[45] Lucy S. Dawidowicz, "What Future for Judaism in Russia?" *Commentary*, New York, November, 1956, p. 407.
[46] *History of the Ancient World*, Moscow, 1946, pp. 54, 56–57.
[47] *Textbook for the Workers of Anti-religious Circles*, Moscow, 1930, p. 292.
[48] M. M. Sheinman, *Religion in the Imperialist epoch*, Moscow, 1955, p. 20.

much intended for anti-religious propaganda purposes as to exploit existing anti-Jewish prejudices for a political end, namely, to justify Soviet support for Israel's Arab neighbours.

Soviet research into Islam has enjoyed a somewhat greater latitude than Soviet research into Christianity. Soviet scholars, therefore, have been able to express divergent views about the origin of the Mohammedan religion and its social roots. The theory most widespread in the early period of the Soviet régime, because in line with the teachings of Pokrovsky, then the official historian, regarded Islam as the ideology of Arab merchant capitalism. Another theory, that of N. A. Rozhkov, defined Islam as the expression of feudalism. A further hypothesis, soon to be dismissed as "un-Marxian," pointed out that Islam was originally the ideology of the poor peasantry and that Mohammed's State was originally a peasant society, although power soon got into the hands of the tribal aristocracy. All these theories were expounded in Soviet books and periodicals, especially in the anti-religious press.[49]

Nor is there agreement about the assessment of the Prophet Mohammed himself. The *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* describes him as a "religious preacher considered as the founder of Islam."[50] A leading Soviet Orientalist, Professor Tolstoy, only speaks of a "myth of Mohammed" which, he says, was based on pre-Islamic Shamanistic myths.[51] More determined in his rejection is Professor L. I. Klimovich, Soviet Russia's most prolific anti-Islamic author, who writes: "Mohammed is that imaginary personality with whose help the origin of Islam was explained and is explained to this day."[52]

It is from Professor Klimovich's numerous articles in the Soviet press that we get a fairly up-to-date and authoritative Soviet view of Islam. This is the definition which Klimovich gives:

> Islam is an anti-scientific reactionary world concept, alien and inimical to the scientific Marxist-Leninist concept. Islam is

[49] N. A. Smirnov, *Essays on the History of the Study of Islam in the USSR*, Moscow, 1954, pp. 181–201.
[50] Vol. 28, Moscow, 1954, p. 599.
[51] Smirnov, *op. cit.*, p. 206.
[52] Smirnov, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

> in opposition to the optimistic and life-affirming materialistic teaching; it is incompatible with the fundamental interests of the Soviet peoples; it prevents believers from being active and conscientious builders of Communist society.[53]

The presentation of the Soviet case against Islam always undergoes slight changes in accordance with the tactical switches in policy towards the Islamic countries. On the whole, it would be true to say that the Soviet attitude towards Islam has been more flexible than towards other religious groups. In fact, there were two periods in Soviet history when the Soviet Government toyed with the idea of extending its sphere of influence with Moslem support. In the early twenties, some Soviet writers considered that militant atheism in the Christian West and religious tolerance in the Moslem East were tactically and dialectically complementary—a subtlety which the more rigid Western Marxists were at a loss to understand. Even Zinoviev, then President of the Comintern, defended Soviet co-operation with the Moslem countries, and on one occasion pleaded for tolerance towards the Moslems. "We must treat them differently," he said—meaning differently from Christian believers—and added, "We have to take into account the prejudices of these peoples." Similar statements were made at the same time and still later by other leading figures of the Soviet régime, especially by Stalin, who, in a famous speech to the Daghestani, promised the observance of Moslem religious law,[54] and Kalinin, who usually talked with greater moderation on religious questions than other spokesmen of the régime.

The cautious attitude of the Soviet régime towards Islam in the early years of Communist power confused the Moslems, some of whom even joined the Communist Party, and it secured the co-operation of a section of the Moslem clergy with the Soviet authorities, for instance, during the Central Asian land reform of 1925–26.[55] This relative tolerance gave way at the end of the twenties to fully-fledged religious persecution. Nevertheless, the early phase in Soviet-Islamic relations remains of

[53] *Zarya Vostoka*, October 10, 1954.
[54] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vol. 4, pp. 395–396.
[55] Baymirza Hayit, *Turkestan im 20. Jahrhundert*, Darmstadt, 1956, pp. 270–275.

particular interest in view of the attempts of the post-Stalinist régime to minimise the differences between Communism and Islam. These attempts coincide very significantly with a general revival of the ideological concepts and tactics of the Lenin period. Soviet policy, as it has finally developed empirically, may be summarised as follows:

(*a*) Islam within the Communist orbit is being eliminated, except for a few remnants, by the destruction of the feudal and patriarchal system on which Islamic society is based.

(*b*) This process of elimination is accelerated by cultural and political measures, especially the total secularisation of education in Moslem areas, suppression of the Arab alphabet and the Arab language as a *lingua franca*, direct anti-religious propaganda, and the persecution of all real or alleged pan-Islamic tendencies.

(*c*) The remnants of the religious Islamic communities in the Soviet Union are used for working on the non-Communist Moslem countries. A pool of "Red Muftis" has been formed who participate in all propaganda actions of the régime intended for foreign consumption, sign statements in favour of Soviet foreign policy, and are sufficiently trustworthy to be sent on delegations abroad or allowed to participate in pilgrimages to Mecca.

(*d*) In Soviet propaganda to Islamic countries, attention is diverted from the fundamental ideological incompatibility between Communism and Islam, and emphasis is put on "religious freedom in the Soviet Union," a propaganda slogan to which the "Red Muftis" are called to lend an air of reality.

Buddhism is more remote from Russia than the other great religions we have dealt with in this survey. It plays only a small part in the USSR—the number of its supporters has never exceeded half-a-million—but proportionately it has suffered at least as much as any other religious group under Soviet rule. In the Buryat Autonomous Republic, where the largest group of Soviet Buddhists lives, all thirty-seven Buddhist monasteries

were closed down between 1929 and 1937. Two monasteries, one containing not more than nine lamas, were opened again after World War II. One of them serves as headquarters of the "Central Spiritual Administration of Buddhists of the USSR," a body which plays a certain part in Soviet propaganda by participating in the peace campaign and sending telegrams to foreign Buddhist bodies. In October, 1955, the head of that "Central Spiritual Administration," the "Pandida Kambo Lama," was specially brought to Moscow to be introduced to the Burmese Premier, U Nu, during his visit to the Soviet Union, to serve as a living example testifying to the freedom enjoyed by Buddhism in the USSR. In Outer Mongolia, Buddhism was even more relentlessly pursued than in Buryat-Mongolia. That country, which until the beginning of the twenties was still a theocratic State, has now only three or four functioning communities.[56]

The "harmful" and un-Marxian character of Buddhism became a general doctrine in Soviet official circles as the oppressive measures against the Buddhist cult were stepped up. Two Soviet scholars, Professor Maisky and Professor Reisner, were originally of the opinion that Buddhism was an "atheist religion."[57] The same view was taken by a group of Soviet Buddhists, some of whom even joined the "League of Militant Godless," claiming that Buddhists did not believe in God. The Soviet propagandists had not foreseen the possibility of a "religion without God," but they soon made up for the omission by proclaiming that Buddhist atheism was of a religious nature having "nothing in common with militant atheism based on the Marxist appraisal of the laws of nature and society."[58] By now Soviet Communism has outgrown its early vacillations on the subject. Soviet scholarship now even claims priority in correctly discovering "the roots, the historical path and reactionary nature of Buddhism" and in pointing out "its true role in the exploitation of the toiling masses."[59] In the first edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, it was still admitted that the philosophy of Buddhism "contains individual elements of great

[56] Ivor Montagu, *Land of Blue Sky*, London, 1956, pp. 45–46.
[57] *Antireligioznik*, 1930, No. 6, p. 68.
[58] *Ibid.*
[59] *Encyclopedia*, vol. 6, Moscow, 1951, p. 229.

value," but now such concessions are no longer made. The Soviet analysis of Buddhism moves within the narrow limits of utilitarianism, trying to explain the supernatural in terms of a materialistic ABC.

On the subject of non-violence the reaction of Soviet propagandists is particularly vehement, in view of its political implications. It was Gandhi's policy of non-violence in India and its popularity among the Indian people which prevented Communism from gaining ground. Gandhism is considered as "a more or less rationalised Buddhism." [60] Gandhism, Tolstoyism, and Buddhism are put on the same level because they have in common "a naive pessimistic world-outlook, negation of the class struggle and negation of industrial-technical culture." On Tolstoyism an authentic Lenin quotation is available, namely, that it is "utopian and reactionary in the most precise and most profound sense of that term." By analogy that dictum is applied to both Buddhism and Gandhism.[61]

Of late, the Soviet attitude towards Buddhism has become more reticent, and this for two reasons. In the first place, anti-Buddhist statements are out of place at a time when the USSR and the whole Sino-Soviet bloc are interested in maintaining friendly relations with certain Asian countries where the Buddhist religion is held in high esteem, particularly Burma, Ceylon, Laos, Cambodia and Nepal. Secondly, Buddhism is a problem which concerns China much more than Russia, and this from the point of view of both home and foreign policy. There is an obvious division of labour within the international Communist camp, and it is apparently left to the discretion of the Chinese to work out ideological weapons in the fight against Buddhism and to determine the further tactics for its gradual elimination.

The Communist approach towards religion has remained static for many years. A certain tactical elasticity has made no difference to the rigidity of basic principles. But the crisis which has taken hold of Communism since the Twentieth Party Congress must sooner or later make a difference to the Communist attitude. As part of this crisis, certain articles of the

[60] *Antireligioznik*, 1930, No. 7, p. 21.
[61] *Ibid.*

Marxist-Leninist creed are questioned by Communist heretics to whom the Soviet press vaguely refers as "anti-party elements," "demagogues" and "nihilists." There is no reason why the traditional, monotonously repeated view of religion should not come in for revision together with other outdated dogmas. Some Communists might argue that there is no necessary connection between the building up of a new social order and an anti-God campaign. They might also consider that the description of religion as "a survival of capitalism in the minds of the people" is unhistorical, since religion, and especially the Christian religion, is pre-capitalist. Soviet militant atheism could claim a "capitalist" or at least "bourgeois" ancestry with much greater justification than religion, since its propagandists do borrow a great many of their arguments from the "bourgeois" rationalistic philosophy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. If the Communists wanted to dissociate themselves from atheism by using arguments proper to their own way of thinking, they would have no difficulty in finding them. Robespierre denounced atheism as "aristocratic"; a post-Stalinist leader could easily describe it as "bourgeois."

The rethinking of the problem of religion and atheism in the Communist world is not only a theoretical possibility but has already assumed practical forms. The policy of the Polish national-Communist régime has shown that the Leninist attitude towards religion needs to be modified if Communism is to be wedded with ideas of freedom, however qualified and incomplete. The return to realism in Poland has coincided with the recognition of the Church as a national institution, the abandonment of Communist infiltration into her ranks under the guise of "progressive Christianity," and the admission that anti-religious propaganda has been a failure. The need for a new religious policy, which the Soviet-inspired faction failed to understand, was one of the deeper reasons which put the national-Communist reformers into the saddle. Although these events are partly rooted in Poland's specific national conditions, their lessons are applicable to other Communist countries where there still exists the same attitude towards religion and church life, and where anti-religious propaganda operates just as crudely

as in pre-Gomulka Poland. If the Polish experiment is allowed to mature, it may assume an international importance much greater than that of Yugoslav Titoism with its intellectually limited horizon.

To some extent the policy of appeasement towards religion and the Churches may still originate from popular front tactics, but the Communists can turn them to their advantage only when they stand ideologically on firm ground and not when they are beset with grave doubts about the validity of their own ideology, as they are in Poland. The new approach towards religion is not a symptom of a reform of Communism, nor of its ability to adapt itself to a changed situation. It is part of the ideological disintegration of a totalitarian creed. A Communism which makes its peace with religion will have little in common with Leninism but the name, which is synonymous with totalitarianism and intolerance.

16

HISTORY BETWEEN THE THAW AND THE FREEZE *

By L. Labedz

In the Inca Empire, on the death of an Emperor, a council of high functionaries examined the events which had taken place during his reign to decide what it was convenient to retain and the way in which the history of these events was to be presented to the people. The official storytellers, the *Pariscop Villas*, " were advised of the themes which were to serve as the fabric for their narratives and poems." [1]

The task assigned to Soviet historians after the XXth Congress of the Communist Party was to revise Soviet and Russian history in accordance with the requirements of de-Stalinisation.

A. M. Pankratova, the editor of *Voprosy Istorii* (Problems of History), an adept in following Party shifts on historiography, announced the need for a general reinterpretation of historical literature written during the Stalin era. Her deputy editor, E. N. Burjalov, in his report [2] to the conference of historians held in Moscow in January, 1956 (*i.e.*, before the Congress), attacked the falsification of Party history undertaken in order to glorify some leaders at the expense of others, the presentation of oppositionists as spies rather than as anti-Leninists, and the embellishment (*lakirovka*) of the foreign policy of Tsarism. A new textbook of Party history, a collective work to be ready within a year, was to replace the Stalinist bible, the *Short Course*

* Chap. 16 first appeared in *Soviet Survey*, 1957, No. 15.

[1] L. Baudin, *La vie quotidienne au temps des derniers Incas*, Paris, 1955, p. 51.

[2] *Voprosy Istorii* (hereinafter cited as *V.I.*), 1956, No. 2, p. 199. The new editorial policy was indicated in the articles: " The XXth Congress of the CPSU and the task of research into the history of the Party," 1956, No. 3, and " The masses, the Party, and its leaders in the struggle for Communism," 1956, No. 5.

condemned by Khrushchev in his secret speech together with the *Short Biography* of Stalin. Yet it soon became obvious that Soviet historians were neither clear nor unanimous about what it would be "convenient to retain." Rapidly changing Party requirements made it impossible for them to develop a new and stable historical orthodoxy. Neither the scope of the change nor its limits were free from ambiguity, and political attitudes were now reflected in the subtleties of emphasis more freely than before. Some academic historians chose to interpret their new tasks in a manner different from the Party historians, and expressed individual judgments for which they were promptly castigated by the Party's *Agitprop* department. What, however, finally put the new course out of gear was the fact that after Poznan and Warsaw, and even more after the Hungarian revolution, the brakes on de-Stalinisation had to be applied in earnest. It is not surprising that such shifts in the Party line should create unusual confusion.[3]

The "un-rewriting" of history, which began after the XXth Congress, now had to take into account not only the demotion of Stalin but also Khrushchev's dictum that "We are all Stalinists when it comes to the struggle against imperialists." The ideological re-freeze called for a more cautious approach to historical revisionism, so as to avoid the "Polish infection."

In a situation in which the Party finds it necessary to concentrate its propaganda on combating or preventing "dangerous thoughts,"[4] Soviet historians can only mark time. It would be risky to commit oneself to any specific revision not yet officially approved, for it might become "incorrect" even before the ink was dry.

The de-Stalinisation of Party history involved also a revision of Russian history as interpreted in Stalin's time.[5] The stereotypes which crystallised then were intended to flatter Russian nationalism. Stalin had been encouraging this phenomenon for

[3] The Institute of Marxism-Leninism is to publish a new journal, *Problems of the History of the CPSU*, to eliminate this confusion.

[4] *Partiinaia Zhizn* (Party Life), 1957, No. 2, is almost entirely devoted to this theme.

[5] A new journal, *History of the USSR*, specially devoted to this question, is to appear soon.

years, and it has not disappeared with his death. His successors have neither the ability nor the inclination to exorcise it. In the reinterpretation of the distant Russian past, the professional historians have greater freedom than they have when dealing with critical questions of recent Soviet history which might more directly affect the "collective leadership." Notwithstanding these complicating factors, the two shifts of the Party line in 1956 had their expected impact on the presentation of Russian historical events, although the effect of the latest swing has not yet been fully reflected in print.

The "cult of personality" in relation to various Russian national figures (Minin and Pozharski, Alexander Nevski, Suvorov and Kutuzov) was not as clearly relevant to the problem of "de-Stalinisation" as the reinterpretation of the role of one "maker of Russia" whom Stalin himself decided to make a retrospective model of his rule: Ivan the Terrible. Despite certain mild re-evaluations, such as the criticism of Suvorov for his part in quelling the Pugachev rebellion,[6] not much attention was paid to these figures. They were neither "de-rehabilitated," nor are they any longer extolled in such glowing terms as before. They were rather reduced in size without being shelved. On the other hand, the figure of Ivan the Terrible, as a natural symbolic focus for the reassessment of Stalin's rule, became a centre of controversy. Ivan the Terrible was condemned by Stalin for one fault only: because he did not finish the job of annihilating the remaining five Boyar families in his struggle with the feudal lords. As he said to the actor Cherkasov, who played the part of Ivan in Eisenstein's film: "this was a mistake." [7] The organiser of the Great Purge felt some disdain for the author of the atrocities of 1568–72 whose religious scruples mitigated his policy. His court historians glorified Ivan's statesmanship and praised the founding of the *Oprichnina* as "a major military administrative reform." [8] Clearly, an

[6] *V.I.*, 1956, No. 2, p. 205.

[7] N. K. Cherkasov, *Notes of a Soviet Actor*, Moscow, 1953, p. 382.

[8] R. Yu. Vipper, *Ivan the Terrible*, 3rd ed., Moscow, 1944, p. 58. The destinies of Ivan IV in Soviet historiography are described by Leo Yaresh in *Ivan the Terrible and the Oprichnina* in C. E. Black (ed.), *Rewriting Russian History*, London, 1957, pp. 224–241. *Cf.* also Klaus Mehnert, *Stalin versus Marx*, London, 1952, pp. 84–86.

apology for ruthlessness on the grounds of alleged *raisons d'état*, when the ruler identifies himself with the State, could be used not only for a contemporary justification of Stalin's action—posthumously it can provide a basis for an historical appreciation of his rule (" for the greater glory of Russia ") by those nationalistically minded historians who used to extol Ivan's role in consolidating the Russian State.

The condemnation of the " cult of personality " immediately provoked an attack on the previous presentation of Ivan as a " popular Tsar." At a conference of historians in January, 1956, S. M. Dubrovski and Y. J. Linkov blamed the cult of personality for the idealisation of Ivan IV. In May, 1956, a special session of the Institute of History of the Soviet Academy of Sciences was devoted to the reassessment of Ivan the Terrible. Dubrovski again criticised the works of R. Yu. Vipper, S. V. Bakhrushin,[9] and I. I. Smirnov [10] for their idealisation of his reign, and pointed out that autocracy was not the only possible progressive form of State power for Russia at the time. The monarchy could have become unlimited, but likewise it could have been limited by a Boyar's Duma or Parliament as it was in England . . . " In glossing over the negative features and consequences of some of the policy measures taken by Ivan . . . some historians, who criticise the mistakes of the Pokrovsky school, in fact have returned to D. I. Ilovaisky." [11]

Linkov admitted that Ivan's " actions followed a progressive line of development, but this should not be held to justify all the negative characteristics in his methods of rule." He also attacked those historians " who approach the problem of evaluating Ivan the Terrible from the point of view that the end justifies the means." The historians in question, though they too ritually condemned the " harmful consequences " of the cult of personality in historiography, would not agree that " de-Ivanisation " should follow " de-Stalinisation." I. I. Smirnov, neatly turning the tables, accused Dubrovski of falling from one extreme into another, from the anti-Marxist cult of

[9] *Ivan the Terrible*, Moscow, 1945.
[10] *Ivan the Terrible*, Leningrad, 1944.
[11] *V.I.*, 1956, No. 9, pp. 195–196. Ilovaisky, a monarchist historian, wrote a standard textbook on Russian history for Tsarist schools.

personality to the anarchist denial of the role of leaders. According to him "this method resembles the Pokrovsky formula of history as politics projected into the past."

At another conference, convened in May, 1956, in Leningrad, N. E. Nosov criticised Dubrovski for "vulgarisation of Marxism." He hastened to explain that "the statement of Lenin, *which refers to the nineteenth century*, that all Russians possessing any national pride should hate their slavish past, is extended in S. M. Dubrovski to the whole of Russian history." [12] Apparently Ivan the Terrible was more progressive than the Tsars of the nineteenth century.

Dubrovski expressed his view in detail in an article in *Voprosy Istorii* [13] in which he contrasted "the negative attitude towards Ivan the Terrible, and especially his cruelties and atrocities, of liberal-minded historians, and even of extreme monarchist historians like Karamzin and Ilovaisky," with the attitude of the Stalinist historians. He concluded that "the manifestations of popular discontent at that time were progressive. They expressed the popular protest against the imposition and development of serfdom, against the establishment of a barbaric, absolutist State based on serfdom, and against Tsarist autocracy." Dubrovski found an ally in V. N. Sheviakov who criticised the previous treatment by Soviet historians of Ivan's *Oprichnina* [14] (the mother of the Okhrana and the grandmother of the Cheka). He contended that it hampered the development of the productive forces in Russia,[15] a weighty Marxist argument with perhaps more than historical implications. The majority of the historians at the conference on Ivan IV cautiously admitted many of the arguments advanced by Dubrovski, but circumscribed them with all kinds of qualifications.

That this "purely historical" debate was mixed up with contemporary issues is not difficult to perceive. Stalin himself used Ivan to create a retrospective legitimacy for his own barbarities, and the two figures became joint symbols to such a degree that now the condemnation of one almost automatically

[12] *V.I.*, 1956, No. 7, pp. 188–189.
[13] *Against the Idealisation of Ivan IV*, 1956, No. 8, pp. 121–129.
[14] *Cf.* P. A. Sadikov, *Essays on the history of the Oprichnina*, Moscow, 1950.
[15] *On the problem of the Oprichnina of Ivan IV*, *V.I.*, 1956, No. 9, pp. 71–77.

implies the condemnation of the other.[16] For historical analysis this is a logical *non sequitur*. For the analysis of contemporary Soviet political attitudes it is revealing. Such attitudes are an expression of social psychology, not of logic.

With Stalin coming again into something like a place of honour, the more die-hard historians may feel encouraged to attempt a counter-attack. Just as the censure of Stalin implied a condemnation of Ivan, so the partial rehabilitation of Stalin may entail a measure of " re-Ivanisation."

" De-Stalinisation " is neither a " return to Lenin " in politics, nor a " return to Pokrovsky " in history. The present requirements of Soviet policy, internal and external, provide a better basis for understanding the ideological shifts and their manipulation than an excessive attachment to any sacred tenets. The revision of the previous interpretation of Tsarist colonial policy is not based on a recovery of forgotten Leninist texts, nor is it a simple rediscovery of Pokrovsky. The problem of reappraisal of the delicate subject of Tsarist expansionism was put on the agenda at the conference of historians before the XXth Congress. Pankratova then recalled Lenin's remark that Tsarist Russia was a " prison of the peoples," which Soviet historians under Stalin had tried to explain away with the help of the " lesser evil " formula.[17]

The problem of evaluating the significance of national resistance to Russian annexations has a long history in Soviet historiography. The current attitude towards the leaders of such movements came to be regarded as a kind of test revealing the Party line on the question as a whole. A particularly sensitive point of reference in this respect is the status accorded to one of them, Shamil, who led the Caucasian tribesmen against the Russian troops in the first half of the nineteenth century. Until the last war he was regarded as a popular hero. After the war he became an " Anglo-Turkish hireling." The XXth Congress provided another opportunity to revise the problem of

[16] *Cf. Literaturnaya Gazeta*, July 14, 1956.

[17] *Cf.* M. V. Nechkina, *On the question of the formula " the lesser evil," V.I.*, 1951, No. 4, pp. 44–48. Variations on this theme in Soviet historiography are described by K. F. Shteppa in C. E. Black, *op. cit.*, pp. 107–120.

Muridism as it is called in Soviet historiography. A. M. Pikman was the first to reopen the issue.[18] He protested against the falsification of history on this subject in various Soviet historical writings, which he attributed to M. D. Bagirov, executed after the fall of Beria. He proposed to regard the Shamil movement once more as progressive, a view not shared by Pankratova. A special conference of historians was convened in Makhachkala in October, 1956,[19] to consider the question of the movement of the Caucasian hillsmen under Shamil. Another conference on the same subject took place at the Institute of History of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in November, 1956.

As in the case of Ivan the Terrible, Shamil too became a catalyst of conflicting tendencies among Soviet historians. But the divergencies are here much less clear-cut. The opposing tendencies are formulated less emphatically, and the attitudes of the participants in the debate can often be gauged only by noticing whether they qualify the thesis that Shamil's struggle against Tsarist oppression was "progressive" by saying that "nevertheless" Muridism was a reactionary clerical ideology, or *vice versa*. Approval or disapproval is less outspoken, although potentially the subject can perhaps engender sentiments no less dangerous by serving as a symbol of group-identification. It is characteristic that despite earlier warnings by the Party spokesman that "it is incorrect to praise Shamil,"[20] the conference in Dagestan, while admitting that "its religious wrapping was reactionary," concluded that "the movement of hillsmen under the leadership of Shamil was directed against the colonial policy of Tsarism and represented a struggle for national independence." In contrast, L. M. Ivanov, summarising the debate of the Conference of the Institute of History a month later (after the fateful October, 1956), once again stressed that "while exposing the oppressive colonial policy of Tsarism, Soviet historians should more emphatically underline the objectively progressive consequences of the incorporation of the Caucasus in Russia."

[18] *V.I.*, 1956, No. 3, pp. 75–87; previously a mild reappraisal was made in *V.I.*, 1955, No. 6, pp. 67–77.
[19] *V.I.*, 1956, No. 12, pp. 188–198.
[20] *V.I.*, 1956, No. 2, p. 211.

It is significant that *Voprosy Istorii*, sensing the new wind blowing, published an article by S. K. Bushnev [21] in which he severely censured Pikman for comparing the struggle of the Caucasians with that of nineteenth-century Poles and Hungarians, who were on a much higher level of development—a delightfully apposite reference. He also reaffirmed the old thesis that " the incorporation of the Caucasus in Russia was of exceptional importance in the history of the Caucasian peoples, in the history of the (essentially) friendly Russo-Caucasian relations." On the other hand, " Muridism and similar clerical movements dimmed the minds of the people in their struggle against various exploiters."

The moderation of Soviet claims to priority of invention *vis-à-vis* various Western technological achievements, from radio to jet-engine, was officially sponsored after 1955 and formed part of the rationalisation of the dictatorship which by its " anti-cosmopolitan campaign " had been depriving itself of some of the advantages of learning from the West. Not that the connection between the stress on Russian pre-eminence in science and its contemporary development was ever quite simple. It was contingent rather than necessary. While condemning " kowtowing before the West," the Soviet leaders always encouraged technological borrowing from the West. Western specialist literature was available to Soviet scientists even in Stalin's time.

Whatever the psychological effects of the shifts in the Party line on the work of the scientists (and there is little doubt that too rigid insistence on Russian national self-sufficiency might have done harm by stifling inquiry and scientific interchange), the target of such campaigns was much wider than the restricted scientific field; it was aimed at the general public. And although the presentation of historical facts and " un-facts " may now take into account, rather more than before, considerations of technological efficiency, it is still determined mainly by wider political factors.

The attitude of historians to this modification of the more ludicrous exaggerations of native achievements also depends in

[21] " On Caucasian Muridism," *V.I.*, 1956, No. 12, pp. 72–79.

the first place on their political judgment. As in other fields, differences of approach among Soviet historians to the "slavish adulation of everything foreign" are now restricted to a narrow spectrum ranging from embarrassed reservation to inhibited disapproval. Again, one lonely figure divided them. The controversy took the form of an amusing wrangle about the date of a flight made by A. F. Mozhaisky. In Vol. 28 of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* Mozhaisky is credited with "the first flight in the world by a heavier-than-air machine," in 1882. Vol. 35, published in October, 1955, ostensibly rehabilitates the Wright brothers by admitting that they "were the first to *master* the art of piloting a plane in flight and of making a landing with the *motor shut off*."

This devious device does not really contradict the earlier claim, but despite the fact that Mozhaisky officially remained "the builder of the first aircraft" a fierce controversy ensued, irrelevant on the surface to the main contention. It began when *Voprosy Istorii* [22] published a letter by F. F. Burche and I. E. Molosov, who, after the ritual statement that "there can be no doubt about the importance of demonstrating the priority of our country in making various discoveries and inventions," accused J. Shipilov and N. A. Cheremnykh of "fabricating" many of the claims made for Mozhaisky in order "to ascribe to our country discoveries and inventions that were in reality made abroad." The authors assert that the date of Mozhaisky's test-flight was not 1882 but 1884. To balance this unpatriotic deviation they correct another date in favour of the Fatherland, stating that the first jet-plane in the world made its flight in the Soviet Union not in 1942 but in 1940.

In September, 1956, the editorial board of *Voprosy Istorii* organised a conference to discuss "some questions of the history of aviation." [23] During the debate N. A. Cheremnykh admitted that there is no documentary confirmation of the test-flight made by Mozhaisky's mechanic Golubov, but objected strongly to his detractors casting doubt on his very existence, and produced

[22] 1956, No. 6, pp. 124–128, "Against distortions of the history of aviation."
[23] *V.I.*, 1956, No. 11, pp. 201–212.

evidence that he did exist. Other participants attacked Cheremnykh and protested that "the builder of the first aircraft in the world, Mozhaisky, whose indisputable priority requires no falsification," had been defamed. One speaker pointed out that "anyone with an elementary knowledge of aeronautics had to admit that Mozhaisky's plane could not have made a flight such as that described in Cheremnykh's book." Another speaker accused Cheremnykh of fabricating both the portrait of Mozhaisky and weather reports. A certain Izmailov insisted nevertheless that "the fact of the first flight of Mozhaisky's aircraft in 1882 is indisputable." An official of the Main Archives Administration of the MVD, V. A. Kondratiev, offered a compromise solution by stating that the date given by Burche and Molosov, 1884, is debatable, but "it is possible to speak of 1883."

The writers of the letter were declared to be wrong in casting doubt on the existence of a certain Krakutnoi, who is said to have piloted "the first hot-air balloon in the world" in 1731.[24]

Molosov however repeated this assertion and in turn indicted the magazine *Wings of the Motherland* (No. 1, 1951) for alleging "without proof" that the balloon flight of the Montgolfier brothers in 1783 had not taken place. Cheremnykh, accused by K. N. Zatonsky of "making political charges against honest people under the banner of the struggle against cosmopolitanism," refused to answer the charges against him "despite the insistent requests of the chairman and many of the audience." The conference ended with Burjalov declaring that the editorial board of *Voprosy Istorii* considered the publication of the Burche and Molosov letter "significant as a matter of principle for our work in all spheres of history . . . free from any kind of distortions and falsification."

Whether the modest progress achieved in pushing forward the date of the first flight in the world from 1882 to 1883 (or 1884) can have this wider significance is a moot question. There is, however, little doubt that Burjalov's attempt to use the XXth Congress line as a "guide" in "fighting for genuine history"

[24] *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, Vol. 23, p. 567.

has been frustrated: he has been censured for his "incorrect" reinterpretation of Party historiography.

"Overcoming the cult of the individual and its consequences," while concealing its root causes, has from the beginning been an ambivalent task. On the theoretical level the old ritual formula about "the role of the masses in history" was revived to take the place of the individual hero à la Carlyle.[25] The co-existence of Byzantine and Marxist principles was, however, to continue. The "collective leadership" could hardly stand on its own feet in matters of legitimation. While Stalin's role was being deflated, that of Lenin was inflated even more. The "father of the peoples" could be replaced as a model of authority not by the children, but only by the grandfather. The heirs of Stalin, having too little prestige or charisma of their own, had to invoke ancestor worship to replace the *Fuehrer-Prinzip*.

On the practical plane, the presentation of Stalin in his dual role of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde carried with it an element of ambiguity. For the first time Soviet propaganda was denied the advantage of the "black and white" technique. Instead of an authoritarian staple diet of simplified alternatives, the Party had to offer a complicated hero-cum-villain story full of innuendoes. Until the emergence of an authorised version, this left open the question of how much of a hero Stalin was. Soviet historians who had to fill this gap under Party guidance could either stress Stalin's merits in the approved periods or minimise his role, following hints from above or their own predilections. Even before the shift in emphasis became quite explicit and official, some Soviet historians tended to accentuate the first aspect. Thus, speaking at a conference organised in June, 1956, by *Voprosy Istorii* in Kiev, the Ukrainian historian N. R. Donyi appealed to his colleagues "to show all the importance of the ideological struggle conducted by the Party, to illuminate the role of J. V. Stalin in the annihilation of the anti-Leninist elements within the Party." [26]

[25] Soviet attitudes to "the role of the individual in history" are well described by Leo Yaresh in *Rewriting Russian History*, pp. 78–106.
[26] *V.I.*, 1956, No. 8, p. 202.

But the majority of Soviet historians preferred the second alternative and even displayed some zeal in following it through. One by one the historical myths fabricated in an earlier day were exposed. At a conference in Leningrad in May, 1956, P. Ya. Efimov made short work of some of these Stalinist stereotypes.[27] Dealing with Stalin's role in the revolutionary movement in the Caucasus he pointed out that "many achievements had been attributed to Stalin in defiance of the facts. For instance it was Lado Kechkhoveli who played the leading role in founding the (Georgian) paper *Brzdola*, and not Stalin." He added that Stalin, who was presented as the sole pre-revolutionary Party expert on national problems, was not the only one to deal with these questions in the Party publications. He denied Stalin's allegedly predominant role in the running of the Sixth Congress of the Bolshevik faction and, using the verbatim reports as evidence, described as untrue the assertion that it was at Stalin's suggestion that Lenin did not present himself for trial before the Provisional Government in 1917. A. I. Arenshtein criticised the article in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* which states that Stalin sent Lado Kechkhoveli to Baku in 1901. He pointed out that "Kechkhoveli could not have been a disciple of Stalin. At that time he was one of the most prominent Social-Democratic leaders in Baku, while Stalin was only starting his revolutionary career." Similarly, G. M. Denisov censured the editors of the *Encyclopedia* for stating that at the time of the Second Party Congress Vorovsky was a disciple of Stalin. "It would be more correct to say that Stalin was a disciple of V. V. Vorovsky."

Another historian[28] wrote that "there is no evidence that J. V. Stalin edited *Pravda* in September–October, 1912, as stated in his *Short Biography*."[29]

Burjalov in an article "On the tactics of the Bolsheviks in March–April, 1917"[30] even transgressed the frame of reference established by the XXth Congress. He dismissed the Stalinist account of this period and described the hesitant line pursued

[27] *V.I.*, 1956, No. 7, p. 187.
[28] G. V. Petryakov, *V.I.*, 1956, No. 11, pp. 8 *et seq.*
[29] Moscow, 1952, p. 52.
[30] *V.I.*, 1956, No. 4.

by Stalin and Kamenev in *Pravda* before the arrival of Lenin. This not only revised the former version of Stalin's political behaviour before the publication of Lenin's " April Theses " and his subsequent attitude towards them (both characterised by Burjalov as anti-Leninist), but implicitly cast doubt on the infallibility of the Party and its collective leadership at the time.[31]

This pronouncement was used by some of his diehard colleagues to attack Burjalov. During the conference in Leningrad already referred to, T. P. Bondarevskaya expressed shocked surprise that he could go so far as to mention " that Zinoviev was elected to the Presidium of the (April) conference and that he defended the April Theses." She also maintained that " Stalin's position before the middle of April, 1917, should not be identified with Kamenev's," [32] as it had been by Burjalov. Bondarevskaya was in turn condemned by N. S. Nosev who deplored her statement as revealing " dogmatism and unwillingness to examine critically the old, seemingly-obsolete points of view." [33]

These esoteric wrangles reflecting the more or less zealous attitudes of the professional historians, caught between the need to conform to the Party demand for a new version of revealed history and the desire to widen the field of academic research, have less political importance than the attacks from outside. The altercations between academic historians were soon followed by the intervention of the Party authorities.

Voprosy Istorii was first admonished by *Kommunist*,[34] then *Pravda* [35] dwelt on its deviations, and finally *Partiinaia Zhizn*,[36] in an article by E. Bugaev, sharply called it to task. The Party historians of the *Agitprop* department objected to the rescuing from oblivion of the early textbooks on Party history by Bubnov, Popov and Yaroslavsky, to the alleged minimisation by *Voprosy Istorii* of " the full significance of the Party struggle against

[31] *Kommunist*, 1957, No. 3, p. 111, presents the approved version, omitting any reference to the topics raised by Burjalov.
[32] *V.I.*, 1956, No. 7, p. 186.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 189.
[34] " For a creative re-working of the history of the CPSU," 1956, No. 10, p. 24.
[35] November 20, 1956.
[36] " When the scholarly approach is lost," No. 14, pp. 62–72.

Trotskyites, Right opportunists and deviationists," as well as of "the difference in principle between Mensheviks and Bolsheviks." But *Voprosy Istorii* remained adamant. It published a mild recantation by admitting "that several views expressed in its editorial articles and also in the articles of E. Burjalov, L. Petrova, and N. Yakovlev were not sufficiently well-founded," but asserted in its turn that "the essential orientation of E. Bugaev's article is to leave everything as before." [37] Burjalov himself defended his position [38] by simply referring to the factual information about the period in question, *i.e.*, he wrote in the manner of a "bourgeois historian" not preoccupied with politico-pragmatic considerations.

The Party's objection is not to the rewriting of Stalin's role (which it launched itself) but to "sensationalist" treatment. The historians are in effect being ordered to perform this operation in a way that does not undermine belief in the infallibility and the political position of the "collective leadership." This rather tall order is less a matter of form than of substance. The more recent the history, the more ticklish the problem. The revision of early Party history, although easier, also presents quite a few difficulties. It is possible to show that Stalin substituted himself for the executed leaders, and that he did not play the part in history before Lenin's death which his propagandists attributed to him. But what is to be done after removing Stalin from the positions he usurped, like Caligula, if the executed leaders are not rehabilitated? And their rehabilitation involves a revision of the period when Stalin's role is approved and praised.

The dilemma of the present collective leadership is here acute, for its own position in this respect is delicate. Hence the revision of the Stalinist legend has hardly progressed beyond the Civil War years, and is restricted largely to the negative side.[39] It denies the claims Stalin made for himself, but does

[37] "About Comrade Bugaev's article," *V.I.*, 1956, No. 7, pp. 215–222.

[38] "Once more about the tactics of the Bolsheviks in March–April, 1917," *V.I.*, 1956, No. 8, pp. 109–114.

[39] The Institute of Marxism-Leninism is to republish the first two volumes of the *History of the Civil War*, without "the distortions caused by the personality cult"; three further volumes are also to be published.

not restore the real actors. Because the rehabilitation of the old Bolsheviks is still so selective, it is possible to fill the gaps in only a few cases, and this often by casting secondary figures in leading revolutionary roles. The recent revision of certain standard falsifications of the early Soviet era was therefore limited to the removal of Stalin from the positions previously assigned to him (in the preparation of the Bolshevik *coup* in October, in the Civil War and the defence of Tsaritsyn, and in the 1920 war against Poland). But the amendments are confined to a reconsideration of what *did not* happen; they are not concerned with the presentation of what *did* happen. They show that it was not Stalin who made the important (or "correct") decisions in these cases, but hardly indicate who in fact did make them. In contrast quite a vital role is attributed to some minor figures who are used as substitutes for those not yet rehabilitated.

In a review[40] of J. Dykov's book on *The Role of the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee in the October Revolution*, J. P. Flerovskii and S. J. Shulga, two members of that Committee, deny that Stalin played a leading part in the preparation of the insurrection by the so-called Party Centre, of which he was alleged to be the head. Both these assertions, they declare, are untrue. They reproach the author for making "the Bolshevik Party appear completely anonymous. The names of the Bolshevik participants of the October Revolution are absent." But having condemned Dykov for his "incorrect presentation of the activity of the Military Revolutionary Committee" they themselves fail to give a proper account of its leadership, for this would have involved the recollection of Trotsky's leading role in this Committee. Even more amusing is their feigned surprise that the editor of the book, published in 1955, "did not notice all the mistakes." They, of course, know perfectly well that it was written under a different dispensation, when the points they now make could not yet be mentioned, just as some other facts cannot be mentioned by them now.

[40] *V.I.*, 1956, No. 9, pp. 154–157.

In this they are not alone. Most of the works written before the XXth Congress are reviewed under the hypocritical pretence that the authors are responsible for the " mistakes " they contain. In fact, all such distortions are introduced according to varying Party instructions. The truths of today are the " mistakes " of tomorrow in history-writing which consists in selecting from the past events that are politically useful at a given time.

The other legend now being revised concerns Stalin's role in the Civil War. It is now affirmed that the " political work of the Party (in the Tenth Army in 1918) was badly organised and that the attitude towards military specialists was incorrect." [41] The significance of this admission is that it was precisely disagreement on these points which provided the first occasion for a clash between Stalin, who was the representative of the Revolutionary Committee with the Tenth Army, and the then Commissar for War, Trotsky. This is not made explicit, but it is stated that, under the influence of the personality cult, the importance of the defence of Tsaritsyn has been exaggerated. It is, moreover, emphasised that " the most important part in that defence was played by the troops under the command of K. E. Voroshilov." [42] Thus the Tsaritsyn myth is un-made, even though Voroshilov has not complied with Khrushchev's plea in his " secret " speech " to find the necessary courage and write the truth about Stalin." The Soviet Head of State has not made public the special knowledge of " how Stalin fought," which, according to Khrushchev, he carries in his head; the Party Secretary appealed to him to do so, assuring him that " even his grandsons would thank him " for this. In the meantime, his panegyrical pamphlet *Stalin and the Red Army* has ceased to be available.

Stalin's title to military glory in the Polish campaign of 1920 is also questioned. In contrast to the version in the *Short Course*, blame for the Soviet defeat in the battle for Warsaw is now distributed equally between the commands of *both* the western and the south-western fronts. The leadership of the

[41] S. F. Naida and Yu. P. Petrov, " The Communist Party, the organiser of victory on the Eastern front in 1918," *V.I.*, 1956, No. 10, p. 6.
[42] *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6.

former is censured for "the bad organisation of the offensive on the western front (commander of the front: Tukhachevski; representative of the Military Revolutionary Committee: Smilga)." On the other hand it is pointed out that "the Military Revolutionary Committee of the south-western front (A. J. Egorov, J. V. Stalin) requested on July 22 that the principal attack should be directed not against Brest-Litovsk in the north-west but against Lvov in the south-west . . . Thus the western front, with its principal strategic aim of launching a decisive attack . . . in the Warsaw area, remained without support." [43]

With Stalin no longer automatically fulfilling the role of a leader in the pre-revolutionary movement, nor being credited with all the achievements after the Revolution,[44] a gap was created in Soviet history which had somehow to be filled. To do this, old Bolsheviks who had either died in time or who had not been arrested as "spies and wreckers," but whose activity had been completely overshadowed by Stalin's retrospective glory, as well as a few others who have been rehabilitated, are being brought to the forefront. Their writings are rescued from oblivion and those who are still alive are encouraged to write their memoirs.[45]

A spate of Soviet publications by and about the participants in pre-revolutionary and early Soviet activities is pouring from the press. But they are mostly secondary figures.[46] The leading actors are still presented to the public in the same conventionally fictitious form that was developed and perfected under Stalin. History for popular consumption is still provided according to the recipes of the "Stalinist school of falsification."

One of the old Bolsheviks retrospectively groomed for stardom is F. Dzerzhinskii. The reasons for this choice are not

[43] S. Kuzmin, S. Naida, J. Petrov and S. Shishkin, "On some questions of the history of the Civil War," *Kommunist*, 1956, No. 12.

[44] "As a result of which it was made to appear that V. I. Lenin acted only together with J. V. Stalin"—G. M. Denisov, "The Presentation of the Leading Bolsheviks in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia," *V.I.*, 1956, No. 5, p. 141.

[45] *V.I.*, 1956, No. 12, p. 213.

[46] Such as M. Olminskii, N. A. Emelyanov, S. G. Shaumyan, etc. *V.I.*, 1956, No. 4, published an article by Ya. T. Nikolaev on "Unceremonious attitude towards the memoirs of Old Bolsheviks" (pp. 139–141).

altogether obscure. Apart from his suitability in general for the purposes of present Soviet historical tailoring, he possesses the merit of being the first head of the institution whose name has been changed even more often than the versions of Soviet history. Soon after it was altered for the sixth time, its fifth chief, Beria, was executed. Presumably to remind the population of its pure origins (and present existence), if not to contrast the "violation of Socialist legality" by the MVD with the strict rule-of-law tradition of the Cheka, Dzerzhinskii is now being pushed hard to the forefront. *Obiit est Laurentius, renatus est Felix.* The activity of the "sword of the revolution, the iron Felix," as the head of the Cheka is again called, is depicted in a film recently made under the suggestive title *Hostile Winds.*

It is interesting to note how the episode of the struggle between Stalin and the Opposition, which according to Khrushchev "was a fight on ideological grounds," is here presented to the general public. "The authors try to show the wrecking activity of Piatakov, and later of Trotsky, Zinoviev, and their supporters, who attempted to disorganise the economy, to demoralise the personnel, and to inflict direct damage." [47] The reviewers of the film express their surprise that although it "re-creates the Plenum of the Central Committee where the Oppositionists met with decisive resistance," nothing is said in it about Stalin. "The eminent role of J. V. Stalin in the annihilation of the enemies of socialism is well known. Should it be passed over in silence in a production dealing with a concrete historical epoch, with its actual participants?" [48] It is true that the actor who used to play Stalin in Soviet films died recently, but this is unlikely to be the reason for this omission. Perhaps the omission itself might have been overlooked by the critics if, in the meantime, new "hostile winds" had not blown up. The removal of Stalin from his pedestal in Soviet history was followed too quickly by the removal of his monument from its pedestal in Budapest. Faced with the repercussions from

[47] "The glorious picture of the Knight of the Revolution," *Sovetskaya Kultura*, February 23, 1957, p. 2. One of the latest volumes of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* refers to the Opposition more mildly as "a petty-bourgeois deviation from Marxism" (Vol. 43, p. 302).

[48] *Sovetskaya Kultura, loc. cit.*

below of "de-Stalinisation" from above, the Party, to avoid the spread of dangerous ideas, issued a warning against the rash treatment of historical themes.

While an intensive campaign for ideological reconsolidation is being waged, historical revisionism is slowed down. Its exponents in *Voprosy Istorii* are rebuked for being too zealous in implementing the XXth Congress line on history. Last December the journal came under fire in the organ of the Central Committee, *Partiinaia Zhizn*.[49] This time the attack was made not by an individual but in an unsigned article, which indicated its official character. Its tendency was unmistakable. It warned *Voprosy Istorii* that "a one-sided approach can lead to the replacement of old errors by new errors of a different kind," and accused it of "a neutral attitude towards views alien to Marxism."

The present Party line was clearly set out: "Several articles in *Voprosy Istorii* give the impression that the editorial board is trying to review all questions of Party history, including those which have already been settled in the sharp struggle of Marxism against its enemies . . . The editorial board is forgetting Lenin's statement that the Bolsheviks grew up, grew strong and were steeled in the struggle against opportunism, which was and remains the main enemy within the working class in the international arena . . . The question of utilising the scientific legacy and of the need to study the works of bourgeois scientists must not, however, be confused with the question of our attitude towards bourgeois ideology in all its manifestations . . . It is known that several of our workers did not understand that peaceful co-existence of countries with different socio-political systems does not mean ideological disarmament. In conditions of peaceful competition between the socialist and capitalist systems, the ideological struggle between them will not slacken but will intensify.[50] Imperialist forces are at present conducting one of the most unbridled campaigns against the socialist countries. They even use falsified history as one of their

[49] December 18, 1956.

[50] This seems reminiscent of Stalin's thesis, now condemned, on the intensification of the class struggle with the advance of socialism.

weapons. Therefore the workers on the ideological front, including the historians—since history has always been and always will be the scene of hard struggles—need to exercise special vigilance . . . Only by an incessant struggle against the vulgarisation of history in any form can the journal correctly implement the decisions of the XXth Congress."

One sentence in this instructive and elaborate exercise in double-talk gives a clue to the current reinterpretation of the previous reinterpretation. "It is well known that several historians emphasised only one side (in presenting various historical events) by expanding their criticism of the mistakes which arose from the cult of the individual. But they fail to emphasise that our enemies are alleging that the cult of the personality of Stalin originated not in certain historical conditions which already belong to the past and which were aggravated by Stalin's personal traits, but in the Soviet system itself, and that it is necessary to refute such views."

The problem of explaining this awkward matter caused acute embarrassment to the Party propagandists. How acute can be gauged from the following euphemistic account in the theoretical organ of the Party of the period when the Great Purge began.

"After 1936, in connection with the introduction of the new Soviet Constitution and the democratisation of the Soviet electoral system, the Party began to reorganise the work of local organisations on the basis of a consistent implementation of internal democracy, and Party organs were elected by secret ballot. However, the personality cult of Stalin, which became widespread at the time, was an obstacle to the further development of Party democracy." [51]

Another author,[52] explaining that this cult "caused great damage to the building of socialism and to the defence of the country," attributes it to "the objective difficulty of establishing the first socialist state in the world in conditions of a hostile capitalist environment, as well as to the individual characteristics of Stalin . . . which permitted the gang of the imperialist agent,

[51] A. Kosmin, "On the periodisation of the history of the CPSU," *Kommunist*, 1956, No. 18, p. 65.

[52] A. Soloviev, *The 18th Conference of the All-Union Communist Party*, Moscow, 1956, pp. 17–18.

Beria . . . to inflict damage on the Communist Party and on the Soviet people."

Soviet historians could hardly tackle such a major ideological problem independently. The Party itself tried to provide an answer in the *Resolution* of the Central Committee of June 30, 1956. Even before its publication, *Pravda* published a translation from the Chinese *People's Daily* of an article on the personality cult, but omitted the passage in which it was attributed to the backwardness of the country.

After the Hungarian Revolution the question was again dealt with by the Chinese Communists in an article in the *People's Daily*; this time it was reproduced *in extenso* in several Soviet publications, including *Pravda, Kommunist, Mezhdunarodnaia Zhizn, New Times*, etc. In effect, while scorning its own historians, the *Agitprop* Department is using the Chinese interpretation of a period of Russian history which might be ideologically puzzling to some Soviet citizens.

After the second attack by *Partiinaia Zhizn*, the editors of *Voprosy Istorii* refrained from replying and until now have produced neither recantation nor countercharges. While the November, 1956, number contained several articles referring to awkward problems of Soviet historiography,[53] the two subsequent numbers avoid the more delicate themes. The December issue does, however, include an appeal by old Party members in connection with the fortieth anniversary of the Revolution "for a truthful re-establishment of the events of the October Revolution and of the Civil War." [54]

This is probably as far as the editors considered it prudent to go. Later, *Pravda* (March 5, 1957) took to task those people "who under the guise of criticism of the cult of personality are

[53] *V.I.*, 1956, No. 11. One such article, "English and American historiography on the October Revolution, Foreign Intervention and the Civil War in Russia" (pp. 147–158), refers to John Reed's *Ten days that shook the world*, mildly praises W. H. Chamberlin's book *The Russian Revolution, 1917–1921*, for "relatively honest exposition of factual material" (though "mixed with falsification of history") and promises a special review of "the undoubtedly most serious work of bourgeois literature on Soviet Russia, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, by Prof. E. H. Carr" in a forthcoming issue of *Voprosy Istorii*.

[54] *V.I.*, 1956, No. 12, p. 243.

trying to revise the programmatic basis of Marxism-Leninism, to slander the Soviet reality, and to distort the role of J. V. Stalin in the life of our country."

To avoid such misrepresentation Soviet historians have now to remember not only Khrushchev's "secret" conclusion that "the abuse of power by Stalin caused untold harm to our Party," but also his public announcement a year later that "the name of Stalin is inseparable from Marxism-Leninism. That is why each one of us, Party members, wants to be as true to the cause of Marxism-Leninism, to the cause of the struggle of the working-class, as Stalin himself was."

Throughout the Soviet era, changes in Soviet historiography have remained almost seismographically a function of Soviet politics. At first Soviet historians projected the class struggle into the past according to Pokrovsky's formula, then they linked the Tsarist past with Stalin's practice, to enable him to exploit Russian nationalism, and now they are revising the past in accordance with the ever-changing requests of the collective leadership. In all these tergiversations, Soviet historiography continued to be a projection of current politics into the past.

In the official exposition, *Basic Problems and Results of the Development of Soviet Historical Science*, A. L. Sidorov emphasised that "in research into contemporary history it is essential to concentrate not on superficial and contingent facts and rapidly-changing circumstances, but on the profound processes which determine social development."[55] But although the archives have become more accessible, even those Soviet historians who have managed to preserve their scholarly standards have to pay a heavy tribute to the demands of the Party line. When they have occasion to protest against the falsification of history it is not because they are free to object to a falsification *tout court*, but because the Party wants them to discard some of the former myths for present political purposes. But it still insists on the preservation of other myths, if not on the creation of new ones. As a result, Soviet historians,

[55] *Tenth International Congress of Historians in Rome* (September, 1955), Moscow, 1956, p. 54.

while criticising Croce's view that "all history is contemporary history" for its "subjective arbitrariness," [56] conform in practice to the ancient Inca usage and present history as contemporary fiction.

[56] I. S. Kon, "On the historicism of Benedetto Croce," *V.I.*, 1956, No. 10, pp. 122–135.

Part Three

The Social Sciences and the Social Scene

17

INTRODUCTION

THE current state of affairs in Soviet psychology has been touched upon in previous chapters. If a whole number is now devoted to this subject, that is partly because the Freud centenary offers a welcome opportunity to compare the Soviet attitude towards psychoanalysis with the view customarily taken in the West. But our examination need not be limited to psychoanalysis, for what is true of Soviet thinking on this subject also applies to general psychology. With the obvious exception of those few Western psychologists who have adopted Pavlovian concepts, Western thought in this domain continues to be in official disfavour in the Soviet Union. The rejection of Western psychology has indeed been no less emphatic than that of "bourgeois genetics." The difference is that, while the spell of Lysenko seems to have been broken, there have been no comparable tendencies in the psychological field. Pavlovian orthodoxy rules supreme; the "cold war" style of argumentation popular around 1950 has been replaced by a somewhat less strident manner, but in substance there has been no departure from previous positions.

And yet this picture is not quite complete. There are critical undercurrents which here and there impinge even upon the official rejection of "Freudism." In dealing with them it is important not to let oneself be taken in by verbal commitments to doctrinal rigidity. Soviet psychology remains mechanistic and hostile to every form of vitalism, but its practitioners are obliged to make small concessions to Western discoveries, although in doing so they are invariably careful to affirm their hostility to everything smacking of what is misleadingly known as "idealism."

18

A SOVIET VIEW OF PSYCHOANALYSIS *

So far as psychoanalysis is concerned, the most recent authoritative statement of the Party line is to be found in the *Short Philosophical Dictionary*.[1] It is worth quoting textually:

> *Freudism*: A reactionary idealistic trend widespread in bourgeois psychological science, named after the Vienna psychologist Sigmund Freud. Freudism assumes that consciousness is subordinated to the sub-conscious whose content is the "libido," *i.e.*, the sexual urge. Conscience emerges from the conflict between the "libido" and the "social environment." This conflict, which starts in early childhood, fatally predetermines the destiny of man, and as a rule induces in him a neurosis or a mental disease. Freudism treats the "libido" as the sole basic "law" of the human psyche and human activity, juxtaposing it to the laws of material life. Scientific psychology, however, definitely rejects the Freudian concept of the unconscious and treats consciousness as a property of matter, of the brain. Scientific psychology ridicules the assertion that the sexual urge arises in early childhood, and denies the "fatalistic predetermination" of human destiny by this or any other factor. The reactionary nature of Freudism is fully exposed by its ludicrous attempts to explain social phenomena, starting with the customs and myths of primitive societies down to contemporary wars and revolutions. Neo-Freudism does not in principle differ from Freudism, although it tries to reduce the role of the "libido" and to introduce similar "factors." Freudism and neo-Freudism are now in the service of imperialism which utilises these "teachings" on the subjection of consciousness to the sub-conscious, for the purpose of justifying and developing the basest and most repellent instinctual tendencies.[2]

In considering these and similar diatribes against psychoanalysis (or "Freudism," to use the official term) in Soviet

* Chaps. 17 to 20 first appeared in *Soviet Survey*, 1956, No. 7.

[1] 4th ed., Autumn, 1955.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 527.

psychological literature over the past decade or so, one is struck first of all by the extreme poverty of reasoning behind them. To discover something like a rational criticism of Freud one has to go back to textbooks published in the early forties—specifically to Rubinstein's and V. A. Giliarovsky's works, dating back respectively to 1940 and 1942. Here the argument at any rate reflects a certain familiarity with Freud's writings, which is more than can be said for the literature produced since 1945 or thereabouts.

What emerges from this rather turbid stream of invective when one has patiently sifted it for content, is a mixture of the usual common-sense rejection of unfamiliar concepts, and an ideological line of reasoning, the latter being the dominant strand. Criticism of the " therapeutic ineffectiveness " of psychoanalysis, though strident, is normally introduced as an afterthought. What really matters to the Soviet writers is the challenge to certain dogmatic concepts of their own. Thus, on the philosophical plane, it is contended that Freud misconceives the relationship between thought and reality. Ideas, it is contended, do not inhabit an independent realm, but are rather reflections of (external) reality and depend on processes in the brain. Then again, psychoanalysis undertakes to transform mental habits directly, in an abstract manner, which is a mistake because it divorces thought from its social context. Furthermore, Freud asserts that it is possible for entire sections of mental activity to be shut off from others, as well as from interaction with reality—which is wrong and " idealistic." Last not least, psychoanalysis ignores social factors, or in so far as Freud recognises the influence of society he represents it as a negative force in conflict with man's basic instinctual urges. By biologising the complex and historically developed consciousness of man, Freud aligns himself with the " reactionaries " and abandons the scientific analysis of objective reality. For all these, as well as for a variety of other reasons, psychoanalysis is incompatible with Marxism.

On the level of practicality it is contended that psychoanalysis rests on a psychogenetic conception of neurosis, as against the (correct) physiological interpretation of mental

disturbances. It employs a psycho-therapy which is far too complicated to be useful for therapeutic purposes, and may even be harmful. It reveals, by long and tedious processes, what is already known, or can readily be established by other means. The deductions drawn by its practitioners from their material are arbitrary, unscientific, and impossible to verify. Yet their falsity can be demonstrated by the therapeutic inefficacy of their method. The sexual factor is often irrelevant. In the place of analysis, recourse should be had to physiological and pharmacological remedies, perhaps in a few selected cases to " rational psycho-therapy." Altogether, psychoanalysis is a typical product of the general mental decomposition of bourgeois culture, and notably of the growing interest in idealistic and mystical concepts.[3]

All these and a host of other critical arguments can be found in the textbooks already mentioned, as well as in numerous other Soviet sources. It is worth noting, however, that since 1945 the tone has become distinctly more strident—so much so that the authors of the two textbooks published in 1940–42 have themselves come under fire for yielding to Freudian influence, *e.g.*, in not explicitly denying the existence of the unconscious. In 1940 it was enough to assert that " sexual factors are frequently unimportant." By 1955 this was no longer sufficient; the official view now is that sexuality has no importance whatever, so far as Soviet psychology is concerned. In fact, to judge from the role allotted to it in recent Soviet literature on the subject of psychology, the sexual factor hardly exists at all. The change-over to the new attitude came during the Zhdanov period. By 1948, Rubinstein, the author of the 1940 textbook, was under fire for " introducing reactionary idealist rubbish into scientific Soviet psychology by conceding (to Freud) that the basic source of certain psychic processes is subjective, *i.e.*, that it is located somewhere inside ourselves." This " rotten compromise " was on a par with the introduction by the same author of " blind drives and unconscious feelings which allegedly disrupt normal

[3] It should be noted that the above represents the image of psychoanalysis as it presents itself to Soviet psychologists and their readers. Whether it is based on a correct interpretation of psychoanalytical theory and practice is of no concern to us here.

trends of thought and normal behaviour by all sorts of unconscious . . . acts." This was a grave deviation. All these concepts of the unconscious had been "borrowed entirely from Freud, Lewin, and other no less reactionary, bourgeois idealist psychologists, and remain completely mystical." Rubinstein got into further trouble over the sexual drives. "He refuses to accept Freud's final conclusions. . . . However, in accepting his general view of the part played by instincts, Rubinstein displays an extraordinary lack of principle. What does it mean to say that sexual drives are involved in the entire conscious life of a person, and that the total conscious personality is involved in the sexual drive? It means only one thing—acceptance of the very essence of Freud's theory. . . ." [4]

Has there been a departure from this attitude in the current post-Zhdanov and post-Stalin period? To judge from recent Soviet writings, this is one field to which the "thaw" has failed to spread. Both *Voprosy Filosofi* [5] and *Sovetskaya Etnografiya* [6] have added fresh arguments to their earlier condemnation of "Freudism": Psychoanalysis is blamed for its effect on "bourgeois," *i.e.*, non-Soviet anthropologists and sociologists. Freud is variously described as a precursor of racialism and an advocate of national oppression, while Western anthropologists like Geza Roheim, Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, Kardiner, and Claude Levy-Strauss, are accused of preaching "the supremacy of animal instincts." In general, ". . . psychoanalysis affords limitless opportunities for every kind of falsification and distortion: the chief aim of its attempt to tunnel through to the unconscious is to induce the patient to abstract from the real world, to submerge himself entirely in his interior realm of subjectivity, to . . . dispense with logic and consistency (it is no accident that the analysis of dreams takes such a prominent place in psychoanalysis). In the manner of the oracles of antiquity, these confused 'facts' are interpreted in whatever way suits the present-day priests of psychology and psycho-sociology." [7]

[4] *Voprosy Filosofii*, 1948, No. 3.
[5] 1955, No. 2.
[6] 1956, No. 1.
[7] *Voprosy Filosofii, loc. cit.*

19

SOVIET PSYCHOLOGY IN TRANSITION

A CLOSE and not unsympatheic student of Soviet psychology gave it as his opinion in 1950 that " the Freudian school will never be revived in the Soviet Union, and all of the Freudian variants have gone with it. I could not even find the works of Fromm, Horney, Sullivan, and other modern analysts mentioned in Soviet literature." [1] According to the same author one could sift hundreds of psychiatric contributions in Soviet scientific journals without coming across a single reference to psychotherapeutic techniques. Yet the " decisive defeat " of Freudian thought cannot have been as complete as all that, for even in the Zhdanovite climate of 1950 the constant recurrence of attacks on " Freudism " testified to some inner uneasiness. By now this discrepancy between appearance and reality has been sharpened to the point of inducing something almost resembling a split mind. Officially, nothing has changed and " Freudism " remains a heresy; unofficially, Freudian concepts tend to creep in through the back door.

A glimpse of this new attitude is afforded by an unsigned editorial in a recent issue of *Voprosy Psikhologii*,[2] the central organ of Soviet psychologists. Taking as its theme " The XXth Congress of the Communist Party and the Tasks of Psychological Science," the article gradually works round to the interesting admission that the study of early childhood has hitherto been neglected: children up to the age of three have been studied only by physicians and physiologists. " As a result, this significant and extremely important period in the life of the child has altogether vanished from the horizons of psychologists and educators. Yet leading pedagogues have always emphasised the particular importance of the first years of life. . . . The study

[1] Joseph Wortis, *Soviet Psychiatry*, Baltimore, 1950.
[2] 1956, No. 2.

of the early period is also very important for the discovery of causal regularity in the development of children—failing such knowledge it is quite impossible to direct their upbringing in a rational manner." Early childhood of course came under a kind of ban because of the importance allotted to it by the detested " Freudists " and others who stressed the significance of instinctual and unconscious forces.

There are other straws in the wind. For years Soviet writers had been encouraged to find fault with the work of such Western authorities as Dunbar, F. Alexander, and others, and generally with the whole concept of psychosomatic medicine. In the spring of this year, however, *Sovetskaya Meditsina* suddenly condemned the current lack of co-operation between " physicians " and " psychologists," while *Voprosy Psikhologii*, in the editorial already referred to, complains that " the situation created in medical institutions in recent years is absolutely intolerable, owing to the incorrect views on psychology of several leading physiologists and physicians." These, it seems, took the view that psychology was of little help in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases. Now, however, " the great importance of understanding the mind of the sick person . . . both in the immediate approach to him and in the subsequent treatment . . ." is once more recognised.

The same issue of *Voprosy Psikhologii* carries a lengthy and detailed examination of a doctrine familiar to Soviet citizens, but little known in the West—that of *ustanovka* (setting), as developed by D. N. Uznadze. The interesting point here is that Uznadze—originally a follower of Wundt and Bergson, two Western " idealists "—held out all his life against Pavlovian orthodoxy, although he conformed to Marxism-Leninism in general. Since his death some years ago, his numerous and active pupils, in Georgia and elsewhere, have gradually managed to get their point of view accepted as at least worth a hearing, notwithstanding the continued hostility of Pavlovian orthodoxy in Moscow. The main discussion, which took place in July, 1955, was reported at great length in *Voprosy Psikhologii* [3] and has now been followed up by an article in the same journal

[3] 1955, No. 6, pp. 72–112.

criticising the Georgian group for holding that " in addition to conscious processes there is something in man which is not contained in consciousness, but influences it, defines it, propels it in a certain direction . . ." [4] This suggests that Uznadze and his followers have in fact adopted the Freudian view of the unconscious, and this despite all the admonitions of the orthodox school. It is noteworthy that during the discussion conducted in July of last year, none of their numerous critics went so far as to demand that they abjure their heresy. This would indeed not have been easy, since the group backed its theses with a recording of numerous experiments which apparently did not fail to impress the gathering. We thus have a situation where at least one important school of Soviet psychologists has tacitly seceded from orthodox Pavlovism, without incurring more than a rather ineffective reprimand.

The manner in which the official school manages to combine doctrinal correctness with surreptitious acceptance of heterodox views is well illustrated by a semi-popular booklet, published in April, 1956, by Professor V. N. Myasishev on *Contemporary Concepts of Neurosis*. The ideological part is fairly orthodox: a correct picture of the neuroses can be obtained only on the basis of Pavlovian theory. Freud is charged with exaggerating the influence of sexuality—not surprisingly, we are given to understand, for within decadent bourgeois society sexuality does indeed hold an important place, just as the " death wish " reflects something real in the condition of a declining imperialist Europe. Adler's doctrines, on the other hand, illustrate the mentality of his " petty bourgeois clientele and their dreams of power." [5] After this unimpeachable display of orthodox sentiment, the reader is gently led towards a revision of some cherished concepts, starting from the virtual admission that the physiological explanation of mental illness is frequently inadequate. Neuroses can indeed sometimes be explained in terms of processes in the central nervous system, but more often they cannot, and thus the author gradually and reluctantly works round to the suggestion that there may after all be something in the idea of psychogenetic

[4] *Voprosy Psikhologii*, 1956, No. 2, p. 37.
[5] p. 14.

causation. "In the emergence of neurosis, great significance must be attributed to inner conflicts." And this after "Freudism" had been condemned for so many years and with so much fanfare! He proceeds to draw attention to some recent work done by Soviet physicians on the connection between neurosis and physical disturbances such as hypertension and stomach ulcers—another subject which to a Westerner rings a familiar bell. All of which leads to the somewhat heterodox conclusion that in the treatment of neuroses recourse must chiefly be had to psychotherapy. Shades of Dr. Wortis! But there is more to come. Rational psychotherapy is not enough. The determining factors in successful treatment include the affection (!) felt by the patient for the doctor.

A study published in June, 1956, puts forward something closer to the Pavlovian tradition. But even here the author, Professor T. P. Simpson,[6] is obliged to make significant concessions to modernism. He starts out with the reassuring statement that "the Soviet system of education serves as a guarantee of the health and mental stability of our children. In our country there is not, nor can there be, any cause for widespread childhood neuroses." (The booklet in question bears a mark suggesting that 83,000 copies of it have been circulated.) He goes on to suggest such eminently common-sensible forms of therapy as not giving liquid food at bed-time to children suffering from enuresis. But in the end the cloven hoof makes its appearance: psychotherapy (including play therapy for infants) is strongly recommended where all else fails. However strong the attachment to such native oracles as Pavlov and Bekhterev, these examples indicate that Soviet psychologists are unable to insulate themselves from the Freudian current. As a curiosity it may be mentioned that the satellites are occasionally granted more latitude, or it may be that the "thaw" is spreading faster outside the borders of the USSR. At any rate the May, 1956, number of the East German *Neue Deutsche Literatur* surprised its readers by publishing some extracts from Freud's writings[7] and an article in praise of Freud—the latter by Arnold

[6] *Childhood Neuroses, Their Prevention and Cure.*
[7] Vol. 10 of his *Gesammelte Schriften*, to be precise.

Zweig, a veteran novelist and reliable fellow-traveller, who finds little to quarrel with in Freud's general approach and even describes him as one of the great liberators of mankind. Recalling the Nazi hostility to Freud, Zweig pointedly remarks that only Fascism need fear the enlightenment inherent in psychoanalysis. When one considers that ten years ago it was possible for Soviet writers to include Freud's and Adler's writings among the " ideological armoury " of Nazism,[8] this looks like progress, but Zweig is an old Liberal who has got lost in the Communist jungle, and his licensed heresies are not necessarily a sign of better days to come.

The question may well be asked, what has rendered Soviet psychology so sterile intellectually as to be unable to absorb the thought content of important scientific disciplines such as depth psychology, and imposed upon its practitioners the subterfuges of which some examples have been given? To answer this question it is necessary to look briefly into the philosophical equipment with which Soviet psychologists approach the thinking of their Western colleagues.

The continuing rigidity characteristic of this domain is well illustrated in so standardised a product as the 1955 school textbook *Psikhologiya*, by A. V. Zaporozhets. Here we find all the old familiar battle-cries of Soviet *Diamat*: the age-old struggle between materialists and idealists over the relationship between mind and matter; the " only correct materialist conception " according to which mind is a property of matter; the standard references to Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin (not yet removed from his pedestal); solemn references to Lenin's and Stalin's " teachings " on the subject of perception, sensation, and cognition; and the usual obeisance to Pavlov. Soviet psychology, we learn once again, concerns itself exclusively with consciousness, which is defined as " the highest, most specialised level of development of the psyche; conscious influences play a predominant role as compared with unconscious ones." Soviet psychology deals with consciousness as disclosed in speech, memory, will, attention (to cite some of the chapter headings), on the basis of Pavlov's doctrines. These include the absolute determination of psychic

[8] Kolbanovsky, *Bolshevik*, 1947, No. 17.

events, the familiar concept of conditioned and unconditioned reflexes, the view of the nervous system as a mode of operation of signals, and of "excitation" and "inhibition" as the two chief functions of nervous tissue. Psychology is thus treated as a sub-department of neuro-physiology. It is hardly surprising that for many years there was not a single journal specialising in psychological studies, and that *Voprosy Psikhologii* made its first appearance only some eighteen months ago.

The relevant point here is that this extraordinary state of affairs was itself a departure from the early post-revolutionary situation. Until the early thirties, Soviet psychology (like Soviet biology) did not differ radically from its Western counterpart. There was a multitude of rival schools, many of them engaged in the familiar game of trying to demonstrate their superiority from the Marxist viewpoint, and on the whole there was a good deal of freedom for scientific research. The early thirties brought the first hardening of Party attitudes, with the attack on pedology (child guidance), psychological aptitude tests, and generally speaking "the introduction of all kinds of foreign bourgeois ideas," *i.e.*, modern Western concepts. "Abstract psychological studies" were to be discontinued, and the former pedologists were told to continue their work as ordinary teachers. At the same time, Soviet psychiatrists were invited to place their work on a strictly materialist basis. In practice this meant acceptance of such standard Western orthodoxies as pre-Freudian academic psychology and psychiatry were able to supply, the transition to Soviet usage being made with the help of a superficially adapted Marxist terminology. That at any rate was the general picture; needless to say, there were Soviet psychologists who quietly went on ignoring the official injunction to rest content with the verities of 1890.

20

PAVLOV AND AFTER

THE new and more militant phase was inaugurated in 1946, with the general ideological tightening-up consequent upon the advent of the Zhdanov era in literature and science. The objective now was no longer the defence of classical materialism against latter-day heresy, but the creation of a truly "fatherlandish," *i.e.*, specifically Russian, psychology, based on Russian traditions of thought, and as rigidly monolithic as Soviet ideology in general. Inevitably the first shots were directed at Soviet psychologists who had so far forgotten their patriotic duty as to borrow some of their ideas from Western writers and textbooks. The climax was reached at a session of the Academy of Sciences in April, 1950, when Pavlov's name was officially coupled with Stalin's, and the Stalin-Pavlov school proclaimed as the sole fountain-head of truth. Stalin's merits as a psychologist, hitherto unperceived, obtained due recognition on this occasion. Further conferences were summoned to affirm the achievements of Soviet psychology following the great turning-point of 1950. The characteristic manner of the period has been preserved in the following typical excerpt from a textbook on neurology published in 1953 by A. A. Mikheyev and T. A. Nevzorova:

> The Anglo-American warmongers who shed the blood of the heroic Korean people, who have used weapons of mass destruction, who apply bacteriological warfare—this so-called bourgeois science is waging a mad war against the progressive teachings of Pavlov. These bloodthirsty Anglo-American criminals hate the great Russian scientist, the fighter for peace, I. P. Pavlov.[1]

These were the years when it seemed that Soviet psychology had cut itself off from the remainder of the world for good and all. How close were the connections between this intellectual deep-freeze and the general political situation became apparent

[1] p. 11.

after Stalin's death. The winter of 1953–54 saw the first timid attempts to formulate a less rigid attitude. Concurrently with the gradual disappearance of the more violent political diatribes there began a gradual revival of theoretical discussion. Here and there a lone voice was heard to suggest that it was perhaps a mistake to erect Pavlovism into a dogma. Authority, however, continued to champion the Pavlov school, though somewhat less stridently. Orthodox Pavlovians like Bykov and Ivanov-Smolensky were unhesitating in condemning any and every departure from orthodoxy as reprehensible. In substance this continues to be the official position, although the past year has brought a certain undercurrent of criticism and a change of tone. The style of discussion in vogue down to 1955 has been officially deprecated, and abuse of opponents (even Western opponents) is now discouraged. At a conference held at the Academy of Medicine in March, 1955, it was even admitted for the first time that the influence of Pavlovian thought on medical practice has been disappointingly small. For practical purposes, Pavlovism in psychiatry had meant sleep therapy (in accordance with Pavlov's views on protective inhibition). It now emerged that this therapy had not brought the expected results, and had moreover been applied in many cases where it had not been indicated at all.

Such setbacks notwithstanding, Pavlovism continues to be the "foundation" of Soviet psychology. Compared with the Zhdanov period, the present state of affairs is distinguished chiefly by the somewhat greater latitude allowed to its critics. The Party line on psychology has not been revised, nor is there any good reason to think that it will be.

The transitional character of current Soviet thinking on the subject of Western psychology is well illustrated by the growing uncertainty over the status of psychosomatic medicine. As late as 1953 this branch of studies was stigmatised as "reactionary," anti-Pavlovian, etc.[2] Its genesis was described in appropriately simple terms: fearing the impact of Pavlovian ideas, reactionary Western thought had hit on the concept of psychosomatic

[2] *Cf.* Lekishvili, in *Klinicheskaya Meditsina*, Vol. 31, No. 9, quoted in B. Lustig, *Sowjetische Neurologie*, Berlin, 1956.

medicine—ostensibly with the aim of developing dynamic and deterministic concepts, actually in the hope of substituting irrationalism for materialism. Any attempt to relate sickness to the conjunction of constitutional and organic factors was also to be rejected. The "terminological juggling" practised by Cobb, Dunbar, Alexander, Menninger, Wolf, and others in discussing organic diseases was to be condemned. Psychosomatic medicine lacked a rational foundation. It revived the superstitious practices of religion, from the incantations of Egyptian temple priests onwards, etc.[3]

For all one knows, this may still be the official line; and yet in practice it tends to be disregarded. So notable an authority as Professor N. Grashenkov—no less a person than the chairman of the chief advisory committee attached to the Ministry of Health—can nowadays assert quite calmly that Soviet physicians, "on the basis of I. P. Pavlov's teachings," have discovered that "in the majority of cases hypertonia is caused by psychic traumata."[4] As if this were not enough, the author blames Western physicians for paying insufficient attention to psychological tensions and seeking the cause of hypertonia in endocrine disfunctions, malnutrition, and other physical factors!

Reports on international scientific gatherings offer a welcome opportunity for smuggling new concepts through the back door, while affirming one's loyalty to Pavlovian doctrine. The 1950 international psychiatric congress in Paris (if we are to believe the reports then published in Soviet learned journals) dealt mainly with propaganda in favour of atomic warfare. Four years later, Soviet delegates once more took part in an international medical congress[5] and on this occasion, as well as others since that date, their presence enabled the editors of Soviet periodicals to strike a new and less chauvinistic note.[6] The Soviet critics do indeed regret that such outdated bourgeois concepts as behaviourism or gestalt psychology continue to

[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Sovetskaya Kultura*, June 7, 1956.
[5] Montreal, June, 1954.
[6] *Cf. Voprosy Psikhologii*, 1955, No. 1, on the Montreal gathering, and on the Conference on child psychology held in Paris in April, 1954.

bedevil Western studies, but they also manage to discern "progressive trends," *e.g.*, Western scientists working on Pavlovian lines, or "distrust towards all elements of mysticism, such as psychoanalysis" among French and Italian psychiatrists. On this subject *Voprosy Psikhologii* tends to be somewhat more liberal than the organ of the Pavlovian school among the doctors, the *Journal for Higher Nervous Activity*.

There is, of course, no truce on the ideological front. On behalf of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, this important point was once again hammered home last year by E. V. Shokhorova in a special study devoted to "The Materialist Teachings of I. P. Pavlov on the Signal Systems." Here we learn once more how Pavlov combated the bourgeois physiologists and psychologists (Sherrington, Koehler, Koffka, Claparede, Jung, Lewin, Kretschmer), not for any particular mistake committed by them, but on the basic grounds of philosophical reasoning. (In addition to Pavlov, the authorities cited by the author in this connection include that well-known physiologist, Mr. V. Molotov.) No quarter is given by present-day Soviet critics to Western "idealism," although Bykov's 1950 assertion that all pre-Pavlovian psychology was idealist and consequently useless is no longer quite orthodox. "However, the task is not merely to add the new Soviet facts about the history of Russian psychology to contemporary foreign bourgeois historiography, in order to create a general history of psychology. On the contrary, the task is to create something radically new, a Marxist-Leninist study of foreign psychology, in other words . . . a really scientific general history of psychology." [7]

The tendency to elevate Pavlovian thinking into a dogma was part and parcel of the Stalin-Zhdanov era which is now supposed to lie behind us. So far as psychology is concerned, the trend towards greater liberalism clearly owes something to the growing sterility of Pavlovism, as well as to the general change in mental climate since 1953. There has indeed been a noticeable absence of practical achievements in the field of applied Pavlovian medicine, and for all their preoccupation with

[7] E. Kuzmin on "The present-day tasks of the history of psychology," *Voprosy Psikhologii*, 1956, No. 2.

ideological rectitude, Soviet psychologists have not been able to shut their eyes to this fact. That Pavlovian thinking would not help greatly towards the psychological treatment of neuroses was no doubt to be expected, but the curious thing is that even in neuro-physiology and the treatment of mental diseases there was little progress, despite the attention devoted to these subjects by Soviet physiologists. The more important contributions in this field—from shock treatment to surgical operation, and recent advances in chemotherapy—were made outside the USSR. This fact must have had some influence on the attitude of Soviet writers towards their Western colleagues.

In another field, that of education, there is something of the same hiatus between, so to speak, investment and output. Soviet theorists and practitioners have for years devoted much thought to the subject of education, and yet one is not aware of any radical changes in the Soviet educational system, which indeed has come very largely to resemble that of the West so far as techniques of tuition are concerned.

It is not yet possible to visualise a post-Pavlovian phase in Soviet psychology. For the time being it seems likely that existing concepts will be interpreted more commonsensibly rather than that there will be a sudden break with the past. The common-sense approach of the early forties tends to reappear—including such down-to-earth prescriptions as a cruise on the Volga as a cure for nervous disturbances.[8] The Engels-Lenin version of materialist epistemology (itself a highly dubious interpretation of Marxism) remains the unchallenged foundation of all Soviet thinking, and Pavlovian doctrine fits it too well to be discarded. What appears likely, and is already indeed foreshadowed in the more recent utterances of Soviet writers, is a less dogmatic approach to the subject and greater attention to Western concepts.

[8] *Cf.* M. O. Gurevich and M. I. Sereisky, in *Uchebnik Psikhiatri*, 1946.

21

THE SOVIET ATTITUDE TO SOCIOLOGY *

By L. Labedz

THERE is no Soviet counterpart of Western sociology. The Department of Social Sciences established in 1919 at Moscow University, which included a Chair of Sociology, was closed in 1924. Ethnography survived in the new Department of Ethnology until 1930. From then until 1939, when a Chair of Ethnography was established in the Department of History, there was no academic teaching on topics even distantly related to sociology.[1] The Chair of Anthropology, which existed in the Department of Biology, represented physical anthropology.

There were similar developments elsewhere. The subject-matter of sociological inquiry was removed from the context of academic life and placed under direct Party supervision. It was subsumed under Marxism-Leninism, which was taught either as Political Economy or Philosophy, or as part of general political education. Various institutions of academic standing occasionally engaged in investigations of a social character (such as surveys of working-class family budgets), but they did not survive the holocaust of 1930, when a purge hit most of the economic and statistical institutes.

The administrative division of the social sciences which emerged reflects *raison d'état*, or rather Party reasons. The Marxist-Leninist substitute for sociology is not subject to academic control but is under the supervision of a Party institution, the Academy of Social Sciences attached to the Central Committee of the CPSU. There are neither departments of sociology nor separate institutes of sociology. The Academy of Sciences of the USSR has a section on social

* Chap. 21 first appeared in *Soviet Survey*, 1956, No. 10.

[1] *Cf.* K. I. Kozlova and N. N. Cheboksarov: "Ethnography at the University of Moscow," *Sovetskaya Etnografiya*, 1955, No. 2, pp. 100–111.

sciences, but this comprises only institutes of philosophy, economics, ethnography, law, and history. None of the institutions which prepare for the degree of candidate in the various sciences has sociology among them. Dissertations for such a degree in the social sciences [2] may include subjects bordering on sociological topics, but their ideological character is at variance with sociology. It would be difficult to learn much about the Soviet social structure from a thesis entitled: "Defence of socialist society—A sacred task and honourable duty of the citizens of the USSR." [3] There can be little empirical interest for Western sociologists in dissertations on: "Intensification of the impoverishment of the British working-class after the second world war (1945–53)," [4] or "Militarisation of the economy and deterioration of the conditions of the working-class in the USA in the post-war period (1946–54)." [5]

Since the abolition of the "cult of personality," some of the favourite topics have naturally been replaced by others. In the lists of dissertations one no longer encounters such once popular subjects as "J. V. Stalin on historical peculiarities in the formation of the Russian national character" [6] (thesis in psychology). Instead one finds "Marxism-Leninism on freedom of personality." [7] But otherwise the style has not changed much. As before there is a monotonous repetition of the current propaganda clichés, and the themes still include such dreary slogans as "Cosmopolitanism—the ideology of imperialist reaction." [8]

There is no empirical research. Sociological field-work in the form of social surveys, participant observation, or any other technique of social investigation, is neither known nor applied to any sphere, from social stratification and mobility to family and industrial relations. The reasons are too obvious to need elaboration.

[2] They are prepared not only at the universities but at various economic and pedagogical institutes, at the Military-Political Academy, at the Higher Party School, etc.
[3] *Vestnik Akademii Nauk SSSR*, 1956, No. 5, p. 115.
[4] *Vestnik vysshey shkoly*, 1956, No. 5, p. 62.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*, 1953, No. 8.
[7] *Ibid.*, 1956, No. 4.
[8] *Ibid.*, 1956, No. 4.

Ethnography is perhaps the Soviet academic discipline closest to the non-existent empirical sociology. Yet it is hardly comparable to Western social anthropology or even cultural anthropology. It is confined mainly to the material aspects of the culture of various Soviet peoples, to "folklorism," social history, and the investigation of various tribes living on Soviet territory. As a study of historical cultures it is largely a hand-maiden of history and archaeology.[9]

During the Stalinist period ethnography was frankly employed for patriotic purposes. Ethnographic studies of the Scythians were added to the denunciation by the historians of the "Norman theory of the origin of the Russian State," in order to free Soviet historiography from alien tendencies and establish it on an autochthonous basis free from foreign influences. Not all Soviet ethnographers were happy to deal with history for current consumption (the historians have no choice). Recently some of them have been trying to sever their close connection with the historians.[10] Unlike the latter, they had already been given limited freedom to move into the contemporary field. The second conference of ethnographers, which took place in Moscow in January–February, 1951, after an interval of twelve years, placed before them the task of "investigating the decisive transformation of the kolkhoz village."[11] The resulting studies[12] are not without some sociological interest. Although they concern themselves mainly with such items as dress, forms of housing, and patterns of settlement, they nevertheless adduce some evidence on changes in the extended family in the village and deal with some aspects of non-material culture. A proposal to investigate more of them was made by some Soviet ethnographers.[13]

[9] The first professor of the re-established Chair of Ethnography at Moscow University, S. P. Tolstov, is engaged on a work on the history of Khorezm, based on excavations in Soviet Central Asia.

[10] *Sovetskaya Etnografiya* (1955, No. 3) published a letter suggesting that the teaching of ethnography be separated from history.

[11] *Ibid.*, 1951, No. 2.

[12] *Cf.* Lawrence Krader: "Recent Studies of the Russian Peasant," *American Anthropologist*, 1956, Vol. 58, No. 4, pp. 716–719.

[13] L. A. Pushkarova in *Sovetskaya Etnografiya*, 1953, No. 1, p. 174.

While the "reactivation of the superstructure" by Stalin widened the ethnographers' margin of study, they had to make the necessary obeisances on the occasion of the publication of his "work" on linguistics.[14] They also duly censured the so-called "Veselovsky school" allegedly connected with the views of the condemned philologist N. Ya. Marr.

Stressing all the time that they are "armed with Marxist-Leninist methodology," Soviet ethnographers use a conceptual framework which is still dominated by the views of Morgan [15] and Tylor. They stick to the enumerative concept of culture and concentrate on its material aspects. It is a case of arrested development. Ideology prevented the scientific progress which has taken place in Western anthropological thought, where new field-work contributed to the development of more refined concepts and to the abandonment of many false assumptions held by earlier ethnographers and "armchair anthropologists." Soviet psychology, being another example of arrested development, had no influence on the ideas of Soviet ethnographers.

These are not the only contrasts with the West. The mere fact that Marx and Engels used some of the ideas of the early pioneers of anthropology to develop their own historical schemes set a conceptual barrier to the development of Soviet anthropology. The teleological outline of history in the scheduled march of humanity from primitive communism to the classless society cannot be tampered with. It would be politically imprudent if this dialectical construction inducing the certainty of "ultimate victory" were to be qualified by the consideration that Engels' notions of primitive society were based on inadequate evidence and some fancy assumptions. Consequently, the new data collected by Western anthropologists during half a century are simply ignored by Soviet ethnography which is compelled to stick to obsolete conceptions.

As *Sovetskaya Etnografiya* put it: "Linked to the positive task of developing the problems of Soviet ethnography is the

[14] "The work of Comrade Stalin on linguistics played an important part in the development of ethnography"—*Sovetskaya Etnografiya*, 1951, No. 2, p. 4.

[15] *Cf.* P. Tolstoy: "Morgan and Soviet Anthropological Thought," *American Anthropologist*, 1952, Vol. 34, No. 1.

struggle against reactionary bourgeois science which has placed itself in the service of the warmongers." [16]

In executing this task Soviet ethnographers have produced a crop of publications in which ignorance of Western anthropology is surpassed only by the arrogance with which it is condemned. It is difficult to convey to the Western reader, accustomed to the normal language of scientific controversy, an idea of the resulting mixture of abuse and misinformation. The level of these " works " on Western social sciences can be judged from a few examples published by the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, the highest scientific institution. One such treatise, entitled *Anglo-American Ethnography in the Service of Imperialism*," [17] includes chapters on " Cosmopolitanism in American ethnography," " The functional school of ethnography in the service of British imperialism," " Psycho-racism in American ethnography," and so on. The resulting picture of American anthropology is summarised as follows in a review in *Sovetskaya Etnografiya*: " It is well known to everybody that some American ' ethnographers ' support the bandit-terrorist anti-Negro organisation, the Ku-Klux-Klan. Hence on the basis of well-founded evidence it can be said, in the literal and not the metaphorical sense of the word, that the contemporary reactionary bourgeois ethnographers are hired mercenaries of Wall Street." [18] Other writings are in the same vein.

Criticism of Western sociology is equally ill-informed. M. P. Baskin declares in his " Apologia for imperialism in American sociology " [19] that " American sociologists are not only ideologically but organisationally linked with the most reactionary strata of American finance-capital . . . (they) are above all the propagandists of a new world war . . . (they) justify and glorify the zoological punishment of other nations. . . . Following Hitler, who proclaimed in his time the slogan

[16] 1951, No. 2, p. 6.

[17] Institute of Ethnography, Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Vol. XII, Moscow, 1951.

[18] 1952, No. 1, p. 212.

[19] *Against the Philosophising Warriors of Anglo-American Imperialism*, Institute of Philosophy, Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Moscow, 1951, pp. 102–140.

that ' the German should not think ' . . . (they) are leading a crusade against free human thought, against reason and science."

No less startling are his pronouncements on individual American sociologists: " Their leader, F. Ogburn, cynically compares their function to that of the managers of war factories. . . . The sociologist Ross tries to show the existence of races with a predominance of ' animal desires ' and others with a predominance of ' desires of an emotional and intellectual order.' The latter comprise all 100 per cent. Americans, *i.e.* in the first place financial kings and plutocrats. . . . The sociologist Bogardus, paid by Wall Street, advocates on the basis of racial ' theory '—genocide, the physical extermination of whole nations. He pours out torrents of dirty slander on Negroes, Chinese, Indians, and other nations which are not convenient to Wall Street."

The list of American sociologists mentioned is too long to be quoted, but it includes certain unexpected names among other " lackeys with diplomas " and " rotten idealist-metaphysicians." Not only G. Santayana (" self-confessed obscurantist "), John Dewey (" enthusiastically glorifying fascism "), or Professor Davidson (" . . . who with the passion of a stock-exchange swindler . . . wants to turn into slaves not only the black but also the white workers ") are attacked as sociologists but even such unlikely persons as Mr. Green (" the Fuehrer of the American trade unions ") and Mr. Herbert Hoover, the ex-President, who " tries as a ' sociologist ' to justify ' theoretically ' the reactionary lunatic claims of the American monopolies to world hegemony." However, " a stubborn struggle is being fought against reactionary bourgeois sociology in the USA by the American Communists . . . (who) are supported by leading American scientists and millions of American people." There is little point in multiplying these examples of Soviet writings published during the Stalin epoch. In style and content they do not vary much,[20] and in comparison with them criticism of

[20] *Cf.* O. I. Sayapina: *Anglo-American sociologists in the struggle against progress*, *ibid.*, pp. 173–200; G. E. Glezerman: " Classes," *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, Vol. 21, pp. 388–92; A. P. Gagarin: *American bourgeois philosophy and sociology in the service of imperialism*, Moscow, 1951; M. P. Baskin: *Contemporary American bourgeois sociology in the service of expansionism*, Academy of Sciences of the USSR, 1952.

" bourgeois " sociological theories published in the early Soviet era, though sharply polemical, looks in retrospect almost like models of *bon ton*.[21]

Have the post-Stalinist developments affected the situation? The attempts to subordinate science to Party control were never uniform. Their fate depended at any given time on a curious combination of ignorance, ideological legacy, current political circumstances, and pragmatic considerations. Thus after 1929–30, when the economists Kondratyev and Groman were purged, statisticians were nevertheless permitted to pursue a " bourgeois " heresy, namely, the mathematical theory of probability. They again suffered personally during the Great Purge, when the directors of the Central Statistical Bureau were executed and many others imprisoned for the " sabotage " of perpetrating the suppressed 1937 Census. But their theories were not fundamentally attacked until 1949–50, when statisticians were told to become " class-conscious and Party-conscious." Pragmatic implications were then disregarded in the ideological frenzy. One result was that the possibilities of " quality control " in Soviet industry were neglected since the old definition of statistics as " a science dealing with mass phenomena in *both* society and nature " was condemned in favour of statistics as a " social science."

On the other hand, Soviet physicists, who in the thirties were forced to distort or soft-pedal the theoretical significance of relativity and quantum physics, were comparatively unmolested even during the Zhdanov era, when it became imperative to incorporate heresies which might help in the atomic race. The vulnerability of a doctrine to empirical social research currently sets narrower limits to the revival of the social sciences than of the natural sciences. The requirements of efficiency are making their greatest impact in the technological sphere. However, some relaxation has been felt in other fields. One such domain is that of economic and vital statistics. Thus the grip of the 1947 State Secrets Decree has been loosened, following a joint session of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences, of the

[21] *Cf.* F. Telezhnikov, " Durkheim on the subject and method of sociology," *Vestnik Kommunisticheskoi Akademii*, 1928, Vol. 30 (6), pp. 159–188.

Central Statistical Administration, and of the Collegium of the Ministry of Higher Education to discuss the development of statistics.[22]

Ever since 1930 the blackout on statistics had become worse. Not only were no statistics published on the cost of living, prices, or real wages (penal statistics were an early casualty), but even the Five-Year Plan figures were becoming steadily thinner in each subsequent Plan. The last figures of professional distribution were given in 1937. Demographic data ended with the publication of the 1939 Census, of which only the crude results were given. The Soviet demographers, led by Ryabushkin and Kuzminov, who attended the World Population Conference in 1954, could not even produce figures of the Soviet population. But in 1956, for the first time in almost twenty years, a statistical yearbook[23] was published, disclosing this[24] and some other statistical information. The social statistics it provides are most inadequate, but they are certainly more abundant than in the preceding period. Some Soviet statisticians who had to eat humble pie at the February, 1950, conference in Moscow[25] but never quite recanted, such as I. Yu. Pisarev and V. S. Nemchinov,[26] could again press the universalist view of statistics at a Conference in March, 1954.[27] Although the concept of statistics as a social science was retained, it was acknowledged that it can be applied to both nature and society.

The ethnographers boldly announced that the primary task placed before their May, 1956, Conference by the XXth Congress of the CPSU was "to put an end to Talmudism and uncritical attitudes."[28] *Sovetskaya Etnografiya* demanded "a

[22] *Pravda*, June 2, 1954, p. 4.
[23] *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR*, Central Statistical Administration, Moscow, 1956.
[24] The figure turned out to be more than fifteen million less than the estimates of Western demographers.
[25] *Cf.* Stuart T. Rice: "Statistical Conceptions in the Soviet Union," *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, Harvard, 1952, Vol. xxxiv, No. 1, pp. 82–86.
[26] He defended the chromosome theory of heredity at the August, 1948, session of the Soviet Academy of Agricultural Science against Lysenko and his followers.
[27] *Cf. Vestnik Akademii Nauk SSSR*, 1954, No. 8.
[28] This and subsequent references: *Sovetskaya Etnografiya*, 1956, No. 1, pp. 3–8.

strictly objective analysis of facts" and diagnosed a shift from the investigation of archaic cultures to the contemporary life of peoples, adding sadly that "this new orientation even now unfortunately sometimes meets with the opposition of some scientists." Whether resistance to objectivity and contemporary interests comes only from scientific quarters is an interesting question. One result of the new orientation is a research project on the family life of the kolkhoz peasantry.

Perhaps to stress the continuous interest in matters of "superstructure," N. Ya. Marr has again been condemned, this time without reference to his original destroyer.

The new objectivism does not amount to much in practice. It moves within a familiar circle. The abusive style *vis-à-vis* Western anthropology has been mitigated a little, and there is perhaps a little less heavy irony, the favourite weapon of ignorance in the Stalinist intellectual armoury. But factual writings are a very rare exception [29] and none of them displays a really critical attitude. It is stressed, as before, that "with the problems of ethnogenesis are closely connected the problems of cultural relations between nations, and particularly of the influence of the culture of the Russian people on the numerous peoples of the Soviet Union." [30] Ethnographical dissertations are still confined to the same limited and/or propagandistic concepts. Their scope, however, has widened. There has been an expansion of studies on certain societies outside the Soviet Union, more particularly the African peoples.

The prevailing attitudes towards Western anthropological and sociological thought have not changed much. There is a slightly more civilised reporting of it, but hardly an accurate one. "Labelling" is still a substitute for argument. It is enough to call George Gurvich a Machist, or Claude Levy-Strauss a reactionary, to settle the problem.[31] The works of Ruth Benedict or Margaret Mead are dismissed quite simply

[29] A unique example of such a soberly informative article free from abuse is a short outline on "Sociological societies and periodicals in the USA," by V. S. Semenov (*Voprosy Filosofii*, 1956, No. 3, pp. 246–248).

[30] *Sovetskaya Etnografiya*, 1955, No. 2, p. 111.

[31] *Ibid.*, 1956, No. 1, pp. 140–149: "The influence of contemporary reactionary American sociology on French ethnography."

as "openly dictated by the attempts of reactionary circles to stir up hostility among peoples, to facilitate the policy of domination over the Asiatic nations, the policy of colonialism." [32] The list could be continued.

Comments on Western social psychology and political sociology are disarming in their doctrinaire naiveté. Informing its readers about the conference of the British Sociological Association on problems of public opinion, *Voprosy Filosofii* remarks pontifically: "When analysing the state of public opinion in capitalist countries it is necessary to note that in the conditions of an antagonistic social system there can be no unanimity about any problems. The exploiting minority and the exploited majority have different interests and tasks. Therefore in capitalist countries there is not and cannot be one public opinion about various problems: to the public opinion of the working-class and of all toilers stands opposed the public opinion of the bourgeoisie." [33] Because they do not understand this, psephologists such as Mr. D. Butler, Mr. R. T. McKenzie, and others, are solemnly taken to task.

Psycho-analysis is condemned and so, in consequence, is its possible contribution to social analysis. This is because "the basic reactionary significance of psycho-analysis consists in the tendency of its propagandists (such as Sullivan, Fromm, Kardiner, and others) to lead the average American astray into the realm of subjectivism." [34]

In the most recent publication on "bourgeois sociology" [35] another author discovered in the West the existence of "a pseudo-science, so-called 'atomic sociology,' which is a part of bankrupt atomic propaganda." [36] Another system, the "sociology of espionage and subversion," is said to be advocated by Professor Jessie Bernard, who "justifies the use of any means, including espionage and subversion, to achieve a goal. She

[32] E Bagramov & B. Lavrentiev: "Racist inventions about the Japanese nation," *Kommunist*, 1956, No. 9, pp. 113–120.
[33] 1956, No. 3, p. 252. *Cf. The British Journal of Sociology*, 1955, No. 2.
[34] *Kommunist*, 1956, No. 7, p. 115.
[35] G. L. Episkoposov: *On some aspects of contemporary reactionary bourgeois sociology*, All-Union Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge, Moscow, July, 1956.
[36] p. 10.

praises Hitler as a practical 'expert in the theory of strategic games'." [37] Although "there are different tendencies and schools in contemporary bourgeois sociology . . . bourgeois sociologists only pretend that they oppose each other. . . ." [38] "Bourgeois sociology has suffered bankruptcy. . . . It is passing through a deep crisis." [39] Nevertheless, "whereas at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth the ideological struggle with Marxism was conducted mainly in the realm of gnosiology, it has now been transferred to sociology." For this reason "bourgeois sociology calumniates Marxism." [40] It is also accused of distorting facts and slandering the popular masses. Its representatives, such as Professor F. Ogburn, "prefer not to notice such phenomena in the U.S.A. as the impoverishment of millions of toilers on the one hand, and the increasingly fabulous profits of the monopolists on the other." [41] In short, "contemporary reactionary sociology sees its basic orientation in the defence of the foundations of capitalist society." [42] With this purpose it "propagates the imperialist theories of racism and of race inequality, the cosmopolitan theories of the abolition of national sovereignty and the subjugation of nations to foreign domination, the reactionary Malthusian philosophy of over-population according to which all evils are caused not by the bourgeois system of exploitation but by the 'surplus' of population, the theory of geopolitics, etc." [43]

The new line in Soviet foreign policy has, however, resulted in a widening of scientific contacts. Soviet scientists, including social scientists, have begun to attend international conferences.

[37] p. 38.

[38] p. 6.

[39] p. 42.

[40] p. 5.

[41] p. 21. *Cf.* L. M. Tsyrlin and A. I. Petrov: *Bourgeois statistics conceal the truth*, Moscow, 1953. "Even the falsified US statistics had to admit that in October, 1951, three-quarters of the total population of the USA were below the subsistence level" (p. 123).

[42] p. 15. Defending Soviet Marxism at one of the meetings of the Sociology Congress, Professor Kuznetsov claimed that not one of the "bourgeois sociologists" present defended capitalism.

[43] *Kratkii Filosofskii Slovar*, Edit. by M. Rozental and P. Yudin, Moscow, 1955, p. 452.

Thus, despite the "anti-scientific character of bourgeois sociology" and the various sins of Western sociologists so forcibly described, it was decided to send a Soviet delegation to the World Congress of Sociology held in Amsterdam in August, 1956. The fact that sociology as a separate discipline does not exist in the Soviet Union was no obstacle.

Inevitably, the composition of the delegation was mixed; it did not include, as might be expected, persons who, in the Western world, would be regarded as sociologists. Instead, it was headed by the director of the Institute of Philosophy, P. Fedoseyev.[44] Other members of the delegation were Professor V. S. Nemchinov (already mentioned for his heresies in biology and statistics), Professor M. Kammari, editor of *Voprosy Filosofii*, Professor A. Kuznetsov, editor of *Sotsialisticheski Trud*, Professor A. Rumiantsev, the present editor of *Kommunist* and a member of the Institute of Economics, and various lecturers in Marxism-Leninism. Not one of the "specialists" on Western sociology quoted above was sent to the Congress. The theme of the Congress was "Problems of Social Change in the Twentieth Century." Characteristically, the Soviet contributions[45] included nothing on capitalist developments. All the papers submitted dealt with internal changes in the Soviet Union. Their intellectual level was poor, and considering their general propagandist tone they might just as well have been published by *Pravda* or *Izvestiya*. Their content and style were in striking contrast to the contributions of the "bourgeois sociologists." Papers submitted by the latter, whatever their merits or demerits, were concerned with analysis and not with propaganda.

Despite the fact that the Soviet delegates tried to be as agreeable as possible, abstained from name-calling, and in their public speeches and private conversations stressed the necessity of international scientific co-operation, there were few indications how such co-operation is to emerge. Indeed, it is not quite clear why co-operation between the "only true science of society" and "bourgeois sociology," which is described not

[44] Fedoseyev, purged from the position of editor of the theoretical organ of the Party, *Kommunist*, reappeared after Stalin's death.

[45] *Cf. Transactions of the Third World Congress of Sociology*, Amsterdam, 1956, International Sociological Association, Vols. I–VII.

only as "un-scientific" but as "anti-scientific," should be desired at all. One could sympathise with the Soviet delegates, torn between personal amiability, intellectual crudity, and party directives. But that does not alter the fact that their application of the concept of science to sociology is still dominated by scholastics. Their attitude, both at plenary sessions and smaller meetings, revealed to the Western delegates the gap which exists between sociology and Soviet historical materialism. It was not a question of rival theories. There is no official doctrine in the West, and many Western sociologists have incorporated a good deal of Marxian thinking. It was not a question of "fact-finding approach" versus "global theory," or even of "value-free sociology" versus "partiinost" in sociology. The epistemological controversies on the thorny problem of "value-judgment" in sociology cannot in practice prevent Western sociologists from trying to eliminate bias in their research. And finally, the obstacles to the development of Western sociology are not being concealed but can be critically approached.

The gulf, which became so obvious, resulted from the fact that the Soviet delegates simply did not grasp what sociology is about. In their contributions they dwelt on the superiority of the Soviet system and hardly touched on the problems of sociological studies, not realising that the question of the relative merits of various systems is primarily a political and not a sociological one. Sociologists *qua* sociologists have to study *all* social systems. But the problem of empirical sociological studies in the Soviet Union was hardly mentioned [46] by those who sometimes referred to themselves as Soviet sociologists. Not only were sociological problems not within their sphere of interest but in their constant praise of "socialism" they did not indicate any social problems which have to be *studied* in socialist society. If problems of social policy arise there, they are within the competence of the Politbureau. The acute social problems of the USSR (as of any country undergoing an industrial revolution) —urban migration, juvenile delinquency, and so forth—were not faced by the Soviet delegates, who showed hardly any interest in

[46] In a private conversation a family budget survey was mentioned, the results of which are not, however, being published.

(or knowledge of) Western urban sociology, criminology, or any other specialised subdivision dealing with relevant subjects.

The mentality of the Soviet delegates, their uniform speeches without any individual ideas, their monotonous repetition of Party slogans at a scientific congress, without any attempt at deviation—suggest that the development of the Soviet social sciences is not just a matter of the "thaw" in the Stalinist institutional glacier but also concerns the petrified minds which emerged from the Stalinist era, whatever their intellectual level.[47] To what ridiculous lengths they can go could be judged by such small manifestations as for instance the choice of literature displayed during the Congress in the Soviet part of the bookstall. That it did not comprise any sociological works is, after all, understandable; but it also included such treatises as *Paul Langevin—Fighter for Democracy* and other pamphlets having hardly any relation either to the Congress or to sociology in general.

In contrast to the Soviet delegates those from the satellite countries in some cases displayed individual differences of opinion and the standard of their papers was higher. This applies above all to the Polish delegates who were quite critical of their Soviet colleagues. Some of them were authentic sociologists, who complained at being cut off for such a long time from the West. Others expressed a desire to learn Western techniques of social investigation and statistical analysis, of which they were ignorant because of their earlier cultural isolation, and tried to arrange for a few Polish students to go to Western universities (including American ones) for that purpose. They also reported on some empirical research, in the form of a factory survey, rural investigations, and a study of the cultural integration of Polish settlers. One of the papers submitted by them was particularly striking. Its author indicated that "while the fact that humanitarian or national slogans

[47] The leader of the Soviet delegation, P. Fedoseyev, expressed the opinion during the meeting of the social science section of the Academy of Sciences on January 31, 1956, that "Soviet scientists taking part in international congresses make an indelible impression on bourgeois scientists by the clarity of their opinions and their devotion to the ideas of Marxism-Leninism" (*Voprosy Ekonomiki*, 1956, No. 3, p. 189).

frequently mask a class interest was known long ago, new experience has disclosed that it is no less possible to mask the interests of an organisation by class slogans." There can be little doubt to which organisation this refers. He also stressed that the "Marxian concept of social class . . . seems today much less adequate, even in regard to the capitalist countries." [48] Only when such daring breaches in the conceptual barrier have been made in the Soviet Union will sociology emerge from the pre-scientific age.

The perspectives of development of Soviet science depend only partly on political changes. In the case of sociology, however, the dependence is almost total. The problem is not so much that it is indistinguishable from social philosophy, as that it is imprisoned by a Party doctrine which has been turned into a State religion. In this respect its position is rather different from that of other sciences. All of them were exposed to various stages of pressure by the Party, but at different times individual disciplines were subject to different degrees of political interference because their ideological relevance was unequal. The risks involved in writing on contemporary or ancient history were not the same, neither were the dangers for Party policy in the findings of radio astronomy and in research on present social phenomena. Sociology obviously was at the wrong end of the spectrum. Questions relating to the problems of its theory and methods were identified with the problems of Marxism [49] and were soon put under direct Party control. It is this identification which has resulted in the absence of sociology as a separate discipline in the Soviet Union.

The Soviet view of scientific method was thus summarised in *Voprosy Filosofii*: "The true and completely correct method of

[48] *Transactions of the Congress*, Vol. III, p. 23. In a report in the official Polish Communist Party paper *Trybuna Ludu* it was emphasised that "the paper aroused special interest among the Congress participants" (October 4, 1956, p. 4).

[49] "The real science of development of society is nothing but historical materialism—the theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin," *Politicheskii Slovar*, Edit. by G. Alexandrov *et al.*, Moscow, 1940, article: "Sociology," p. 531. "Only the ideologists of the proletariat, Marx, Engels . . . established the real science of society and its laws," *Kratki Filosofskii Slovar*, Edit. by M. Rozental and P. Yudin, Moscow, 1955, article: "Sociology," pp. 451–452.

every science is nothing other than the concrete application of dialectical materialism to that science." [50] The case of sociology was peculiar in this respect. *Diamat* was to be applied to other sciences as an unspecific method. Sociology, identified with historical materialism, was indissolubly linked with it. Epistemology and the subject-matter of knowledge were less easily separable here than elsewhere. Marxism *tout court* thus became a sort of substitute for sociology. As an ideology, however, it served as a legitimation of the system, and this made its position as a theory of social analysis hopelessly ambiguous. The contrast (which existed in nuclear form in Marx himself, in his roles of social analyst and social revolutionary) became institutionalised in the Soviet Union, where political needs quickly overruled the critical necessities of study. In effect the desire to change the world outran the necessity to understand it. One consequence of this was that sociology failed to develop from a concept into a discipline. Any independent social research might reveal facts difficult to reconcile with the current Party dogma, or even strike at the roots of its ideological legitimation.

When demographers reveal population deficiences, that is bad enough, but if sociologists were permitted to find out whether Soviet society is becoming classless, they might undermine the position of a Party claiming an historical mandate for its monopoly of power in terms of what is partly a sociological theory. It is not surprising that the Party is not interested in empirical investigation which might disclose errors in doctrine. This does not exclude the possibility that such auxiliary techniques as the methodology of social surveys based on sampling could eventually be adopted for limited purposes. But it is inconceivable that, for instance, " Gallup polls " of political opinions, or other forms of research dealing with political attitudes, will be acceptable, as long as the façade of political unanimity is the form.

At various times, the changes in the margin of rationality in the treatment of sociological themes have depended on the laxity or rigidity permitted in the interpretation of the ruling doctrine. At different periods there were smaller or greater outlets for

[50] No. 5, 1952 p. 203.

the manifestation of various attitudes, by means of changing emphasis on Marxian scriptures. But even those Soviet scientists who press for the relaxation of " partiinost " in their disciplines have to use suitable quotations from Marx or Lenin (Stalin is in eclipse as a source of quotations) to justify their positions.

While for other sciences in the Soviet Union the problem of the application of Marxism is contingent, for sociology it is fundamental. It has not so far emerged as a science, for reasons similar to those which prevented natural science from freeing itself from the shackles of theological scholasticism in the Middle Ages as long as the hold of the Church on the State remained unshaken.

22

CONFLICT BETWEEN THE GENERATIONS *

REPORTS of unrest among the younger generation in the USSR are no longer limited to travellers' tales. It is becoming evident from the utterances of Soviet leaders, and from the growing frequency of complaints in the Party newspapers, that the régime is seriously concerned over the state of mind manifested by the young. There has of late been a growth of evidence pointing to something like an incipient cleavage between the official world and the new Soviet intelligentsia, over and above the normal antagonism between the generations. In what follows an attempt is made to sift this evidence and to relate it to the already familiar campaign against political lassitude and individualism which has been going on for some time and is often represented as an attempt to improve work discipline and combat hooliganism. While such intentions undoubtedly do play their part, it is increasingly evident that what is at stake is nothing less than the régime's hold over the loyalties of the younger generation as a whole.

A crisis of this nature is particularly significant for the Communist Party in view of its historic claim to embody those progressive and forward-looking tendencies which would normally be expected to make an appeal to the young. Lenin—like other revolutionary leaders—tended to identify his party with the radical aspirations of the rebellious younger generation of his day. As far back as 1905 one finds him denouncing the "idiotic, philistine, Oblomovish fear of the young," and in a polemic against the Mensheviks about the same time he makes this characteristic claim: "We are the party of the future, but the future belongs to the young. We are the party of innovation, and it is to the innovators that youth always gladly gives its

* Chaps. 22–24 first appeared in *Soviet Survey*, 1957, No. 12.

allegiance. We are the party of self-sacrificing struggle against the ancient rot, and the young are always readiest for sacrificial combat . . . we shall always be the party of the youth of the advanced class ! "

Such claims are not peculiar to the Communist Party, but they have played their part in fashioning its characteristic attitude down to the present day. It is then a serious matter for the Party's present leaders to find themselves at odds with the younger generation in the USSR after almost forty years of Communist indoctrination. The situation differs from that in the Eastern European satellites, where Communism came in the wake of Soviet occupation and barely had time to take root before it was shaken by the de-Stalinisation drive and the recent political upheavals in Poland and Hungary. In the USSR, by contrast, we are dealing with a fully established society which is showing signs of ossification. The normal tension between the generations thus has to work itself out against a background of what appears to be growing dissatisfaction among the student youth, and possibly the younger generation of the working class as well, with an already petrified state of affairs. Recent events in Eastern Europe have shown that such dissatisfaction can have dangerous consequences. Presumably the Soviet leaders are aware that the danger—from their point of view—lies in too close contact between critically minded intellectuals and restless elements among the factory workers. Hence Khrushchev's remarkable threat last November to have rebellious students relegated to factory work, a threat uttered by the First Secretary in an address to a crowded meeting of Moscow youth.[1]

Coming at a time when the students were presumably affected by the revolutionary upheavals in Eastern Europe, to which Khrushchev obliquely referred by claiming that such measures had been threatened against students in Rumania by " the workers " in that country, the incident takes its place with other recent signs of calculated anti-intellectualism among the Soviet hierarchy. The purpose of such threats quite clearly is two-fold: to evoke greater compliance and to set the workers against the intelligentsia.

[1] As reported in *Pravda*, November 10, 1956.

Like other recent manifestations of unrest in Soviet society, the reported wave of criticism in the universities goes back to the de-Stalinisation campaign, and indeed to the whole essay in liberalisation since Stalin's death. Prior to that event, discontent appears to have taken two distinct forms: political opposition among small circles of students, culminating (according to the reports of former labour camp inmates released from Soviet imprisonment in recent years) in arrests carried out in 1951–52 at Leningrad University and elsewhere; and secondly, the gradual spread in the late forties of various curious fashions of dress and demeanour which have their counterpart in the West ("Stilyagi," "Zoot-suiters," "Teddy-boys") but which in the peculiar Soviet environment came to be regarded by the authorities as something more than a passing moral problem. Over and above these conscious or unconscious forms of resistance to political education, observers have been aware of a growing apathy among the young, a mood perhaps more dangerous than overt resistance. It is, however, only since Stalin's death in 1953, and more particularly since the stirring and tragic events in Eastern Europe, that these various tendencies appear to have coalesced into something like a consistent rejection of the prescribed modes of behaviour, standards of thought, and even political loyalties.

How far this cleavage is already experienced at the level of systematic thinking is still an open question. Certainly there must be differences between the attitude displayed by the critically minded student youth in the USSR and their opposite numbers in Eastern Europe, where opportunities for contact with other forms of thought have been so much more numerous. Recent visitors to Poland have brought back an impression of vastly greater intellectual freedom than Soviet students are likely to enjoy in the near future. On the other hand, it is not inconceivable that the rejection of Communist ideology may pass through stages analogous to some of the more bizarre manifestations reported from Hungary in recent months, *e.g.*, the interest taken by some young people—long exposed to boring lectures on dialectical materialism—in various officially proscribed forms of irrationalism, from Buddhism to astrology and occultism!

Sheer boredom at endless political and ideological lectures seems common to the younger generation in the Soviet orbit—witness the victorious campaign of the Polish students for a drastic reduction in compulsory *Diamat* at college, and the hitherto unsuccessful attempts of their East German and Czechoslovak colleagues to achieve the same modest goal. But boredom is among the lesser manifestations of the current malaise, if recent first-hand reports are to be trusted. What is central to the situation is the inherent cleavage within a society where the young are brought up to revere certain broadly humanistic tenets which Soviet Communism shares with Western liberalism—only to make the shattering discovery, on leaving school, that no more than lip service is paid to these fine ideals of social justice and fellowship in the actual society in which they are expected to take their place. One would not wish to claim that this problem is altogether peculiar to the USSR, but owing to the totalitarian character of the régime, and the immense gap between promise and performance, it is perhaps more sharply accentuated in the Soviet Union than in any other country at the present time. Hence on the one hand the spread of cynicism among the more sophisticated members of the younger generation—especially those whose parents have already achieved some standing in the official hierarchy—and on the other the growing concern of the Party functionaries over a state of affairs which tends to drive the more intelligent into opposition, while favouring the rise of dull careerists and conformists. The régime repels those whom it most urgently needs: the intellectual élite on which its future depends. It repels them by its brutality and hypocrisy, as well as by the anti-intellectualism it affects on occasions when it comes up against opposition. Yet it must also try to win them over. It is against this complex background that the recent stirrings should be judged.

State supervision over the young is exercised through various channels, but the official Communist youth organisation, the *Komsomol*, remains the régime's principal instrument of control. Like its parent body, the Communist Party, it has over the years developed from the voluntary organisation of a small minority of enthusiasts into a vast, rigidly centralised assemblage of

members whose recruiting is both all-embracing and virtually compulsory. In 1918, at the outset of the revolution, it was a " vanguard " of some 20,000 young people. By 1954, when it held its 12th so-called congress, its membership had swollen to such dimensions that, together with its affiliated " Pioneer " organisation for boys and girls of school age, it embraced some 19 million adherents, or the near-totality of the age-groups available for quasi-voluntary enrolment. Side by side with this numerical inflation, its political importance underwent a sharp decline. In the 1920s the Party leaders tended to regard it as the main instrument for influencing the young and giving them a sound political education. Today this task has been handed over to the school, and to some extent the factory. Compared with them the *Komsomol* plays a subordinate part in moulding the minds of the rising generation. It continues, however, to function as the chief recruiting ground for the Party cadres, and the apparent decline of its political and moral influence among the young must therefore be a matter of concern to the Party leaders.

The causes of this decline are now accorded somewhat more frequent mention in the Soviet press, with some emphasis being devoted of late to the noxious influence of the Stalin cult. Thus E. Sokolov, one of the *Komsomol's* leading functionaries, writing in the November issue of its organ, *Molodoi Kommunist*, notes the detrimental effect of the " cult of the individual " on the organisation's work, and notably on the choice of functionaries at all levels, *i.e.*, on the process of co-optation whereby the leading personnel is recruited with a view to further subsequent advancement in the Party apparatus itself. " Superficially, all was in good order. Only those joined the executive who had been elected by the meeting. All participants at meetings (on whatever level) had full freedom (in theory) to approve or disapprove the various candidacies. The safeguard of free elections lies in free discussion and a secret ballot. Yet in practice the elections were decided beforehand by the higher authorities." And he goes on to describe how it became common practice to push through the choice of the " approved " candidate by all available means, including direct pressure, while the ordinary members

became mere passive onlookers. Of late, according to the same author, there has been a great improvement in this respect. Indeed, he feels that the reaction may have gone too far—some "activists" apparently tending to interpret their new freedom so broadly as to oppose on principle any "recommendation" from on high. This, of course, cannot be tolerated, and so we now have the spectacle of *Komsomol* units being admonished to observe the principles of "democratic centralism," *i.e.*, to submit to decisions taken by the proper authorities at a higher level. . . .

Since the *Komsomol* for practical purposes embraces the younger members of the growing world of Soviet officialdom, it is not surprising to find that the cynicism engendered by such practices finds expression among broad strata of the student youth and the young generation inside and outside the schools. At the higher levels of the new social hierarchy, the phenomenon most commented upon by official moralists in recent years is usually summed up in the term *beloruchki*—those with white hands, *i.e.*, shirkers who refuse to do their patriotic duty in connection with the officially sponsored drives for settling new territories, or quite simply young people from relatively well-to-do families who are disinclined to soil their hands by working. This theme now furnishes the subject-matter for countless sermons in the press, as well as for novels, poems, cartoons, and even paintings. It is common practice for students to be directed to work after the completion of their formal training, the Far North, Siberia, Central Asia and other outlying territories of the Union being among the principal training grounds. The reluctance to go there is by no means confined to Moscow and Leningrad. A correspondent from Erivan (Armenia) reports for instance in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* [2] that there was not a single student among the 1,800 members of the local *Komsomol* who went to Kazakhstan.

The *Komsomol* ranks high among the instruments employed for quasi-compulsory enrolment in these fields, and much of its unpopularity with the young is clearly due to this fact. But it would also appear that the various pressures employed to this

[2] December 21, 1956.

end are not as effective as they used to be, for press reports disclose that the percentage of successful shirkers is fairly high. A substantial proportion of the youthful settlers recruited for Khrushchev's drive to populate the Central Asian "virgin territories" manage to filter back to European Russia, and *Komsomolskaya Pravda* has lately had to give renewed attention to this subject.

Official pressure on the young to conform to decisions taken by their elders is, however, diagnosed as only one among various factors tending to lower the prestige of the *Komsomol* among its more or less voluntary members. Much stress is now laid upon the need to overcome rigidity and "formalism" in its educational work, *i.e.*, the endless boring routine of political indoctrination. For years now *Komsomolskaya Pravda* has virtually been a replica of *Pravda*, the official Party paper, while *Smena*—originally planned as a lively picture magazine for the young—in practice turned out to be no more than a counterpart of *Ogonek*, the "official" and very dull pictorial weekly. It is a noteworthy feature of the Soviet scene that while the official children's literature is generally well edited and sometimes brilliantly imaginative, little of interest or value has for many years been produced for the benefit of adolescents and students. There are hundreds of "Party" novels—but very few *Komsomol* novels. The literature published for the purpose of instructing them was for many years chiefly conspicuous for its unbearable dullness. Now there are signs of change. The need to brighten the lives of the young is freely admitted, and a strenuous effort is being made to render *Komsomol* activities more attractive. To this end, games, parades, dances and other festivities are now strongly recommended, and the fourth page of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* has been given over almost entirely to sports reportage—a notable innovation. Politics are no longer emphasised quite to the same extent, and where official festivities still centre upon some revolutionary event of the by now almost legendary past, the emphasis is on "revolutionary romanticism" suitable to youthful tastes. Thus *Komsomolskaya Pravda*[3] finds praise for the example set by the "Pioneers" (youth organisation) of

[3] December 11, 1956, editorial.

Moscow's Sverdlov district who marked a recent occasison by a ceremony which included the solemn presentation of a faded banner dating back to the Paris Commune of 1871, and the recitation of stirring events of the past by veterans of the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917–18. "Even the legendary Budenny was present. The older participants did not trouble to hide their emotions and tears." It is now official policy to "bring the revolutionary traditions home to the Pioneers," *i.e.*, to dramatise them in suitable form for the benefit of the generation currently passing through elementary school.

The current of unrest started by the XXth Congress is reflected in the Soviet press through the distorting medium of numberless unrelated case histories, all pointing to the existence of a common factor which is rarely acknowledged as such: dissatisfaction with Soviet life. What the press does talk about is something more palpable: lack of discipline, a tendency to contradict one's elders and betters. Thus publicity was given last summer to the case of two students in the Taganrog school for radio engineering who were expelled for "breaches of discipline." According to the *Komsomolskaya Pravda*[4] they had in fact made nuisances of themselves by asking one of their teachers awkward questions. The teacher, a young woman called Budagova, was deeply shocked when one of the students, who had come across a copy of John Reed's unorthodox account of the October Revolution, *Ten Days that Shook the World*, questioned the reliability of the accounts given in the official textbooks of the same events. Instead of clarifying the matter for her pupil, the teacher, we are informed, cut him short, while the directors of the school for their part discouraged all attempts to discuss troublesome questions by cross-examining the more restless spirits and finally expelling two of them. To the *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, all this was clear evidence of retrograde authoritarianism: "It may be true that the seminar on Marxism-Leninism has since become quieter, but will anyone ever again get up and question some point that is not clear to him? Much harm has been done, and the directors of the Taganrog institute are altogether mistaken if they believe they can teach Marxism

[4] August 9, 1956.

and, in general, educate the younger generation with the help of such methods."

Four months later, under the impact of events in Poland and Hungary, the prevailing mental climate had become less hospitable to unorthodoxy and questioning. As ideological controls were tightened, *Komsomolskaya Pravda* changed its line and, on December 4, issued a sustained indictment against the "comrades from the Leningrad polytechnical school" who had transgressed in recent weeks. Discussion and criticism were indeed permissible, even desirable. "However, some of the debates which have lately taken place in certain of our universities and technical colleges cannot pass unchallenged." Along with justifiable criticism of writers and artists who during the period of the "cult of the individual" had committed various errors, there had been demagogic sallies and "attempts at wholesale debunking of the achievements of our socialist culture." The offenders included the student gazette *Kultura*, edited at the Leningrad polytechnic with a view to preparing the academic youth for the (Communist) world youth festival planned to take place in Moscow in 1957.[5] Instead of attending to that task its editors had given pride of place to literary matters and, what was worse, neglected ideological content in favour of "subjectivist, purely aesthetic issues." One of the contributors had been permitted to write an article on Cézanne—itself a dubious topic—and to suggest that impressionism had revolutionary significance for painting. Another had given praise to expressionist tendencies in recent Soviet poetry, while a third had found excuses for the "decadent" trend in pre-revolutionary Russian literature and art, on the grounds that "the arts were in a process of ferment, when all were searching for something new, when great authorities crumbled with unbelievable rapidity": a statement solemnly condemned as unhistorical by *Komsomolskaya Pravda* which complains that the writer had apparently never heard of Lenin's and Gorki's views on the subject.

[5] The Soviet press has complained of late about the emergence of an "unofficial" press in the universities. Among the unofficial organs mentioned there was *New Voices* and even one self-styled *Heresy* (*cf. Komsomolskaya Pravda*, December 28).

By way of countering this kind of restlessness, the literature specially produced by *Komsomol* book and magazine publishers now devotes greater attention to "human interest" topics including the fateful subject of love. The correspondence columns are likewise pressed into service, debates on proper conduct and Soviet morals being conducted in the form of an exchange of letters among readers. The common procedure is for some letter-writer to raise a problem of conflicting loyalties, and for others to write in—with some help from the editors no doubt—in order to give the correct solution. A typical discussion of this sort, which last November filled the columns of *Smena,* was started by one N. Volkov from Vologda who sent in an account of the tribulations of two young people: young Vinkenti (Kesha) has developed an interest in Katya, a working girl *activist* belonging to a lower social category than his own. Kesha's father appears to be a local big-wig, and Kesha's own interests are circumscribed by dancing and flirtation. Unwilling to study himself, he sees no point in Katya's strenuous efforts at self-improvement. Yet Katya loves this good-for-nothing (who also has several other lady friends) and is inclined to take seriously his offer of marriage. What puts her off is his snobbish behaviour towards her mother, who advises her to look for a suitable partner among her own stratum, a "simple working-class boy." Kesha is hurt and leaves, Katya follows her mother's advice but is unhappy. Her parents are in doubt whether they did the right thing, and the story ends with the question: who was right? In reply to such stories there are usually scores of letters putting forward various solutions, mostly on the conflicting themes that (a) the girl was right to get rid of her suitor, and should never have fallen for the glamour of his father's *Pobeda* car; (b) she was wrong not to try to improve his morals; (c) where was the collective? In other words, why was Kesha exposed to the unhealthy social influences which led to his becoming a wastrel? The existence of social differentiation appears to be taken for granted.

The theme of personal stress arising from differences in family and social background is not an uncommon one nowadays in Soviet literature, and tales such as the one just related must

have an appeal to the average reader, for they appear with remarkable frequency in what may be termed " middle-brow " magazines (as do detective stories of a somewhat primitive kind—another innovation apparently intended to liven up the standard works of fiction by lending them a thriller aspect).[6] At a higher level, the elite of the academic youth is reported to be showing greater interest in the Soviet counterpart of what in the West would be termed highbrow poetry and fiction. New editions of Alexander Blok, Esenin and Pasternak run into tens of thousands and are eagerly bought up. There is, in fact, considerable interest in poetry—some of it indifferent in quality —while the writing of verse likewise appears more widespread than in the contemporary Western world. To some extent this appears to be a general Eastern European phenomenon. The intellectual elite whose tastes turn in this direction is to be distinguished from the mass audience to whom the *Komsomol* literature is addressed. To what extent this differentiation represents a social cleavage must at this stage remain doubtful.

There has been of late a constant stream of unfavourable comment in the Soviet Union upon such post-war phenomena as hooliganism and the emergence of a spoiled and parasitic *jeunesse dorée*. The two must not be confused, as is sometimes done by Western reporters. Of the two hooliganism is clearly regarded as the more serious problem, since it affects large numbers of working-class youngsters.[7] It is now common form for Soviet newspapers to complain about youthful delinquency, drunken orgies, the existence of gangs and gang warfare, the terrorising of whole streets or districts by youthful hoodlums, and manifestations of crass indiscipline in schools and factories. Frequently the authorities are blamed for not countering these excesses or for turning a blind eye. It is also admitted that passers-by normally do not interfere to protect people who are

[6] Since the late autumn, however (when Mr. Molotov was brought in to control cultural affairs), the preoccupation with love stories, and " private affairs " in Soviet literature has again been frowned upon. (*Cf. Sovetskaya Kultura*, December 4, 1956.)

[7] In late December the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet issued a new decree on cases of " minor hooliganism " which underlines the seriousness of the situation. Under its terms offenders will be held in prison, and can no longer be freed before coming into court.

being beaten up by hooligans. There have even been reports of murders being committed in secondary schools.

The seriousness with which this lawlessness is regarded in official quarters was demonstrated at a conference held last October in the Kremlin, when two thousand young men and women from various walks of life were addressed by leading security officials on the general theme "Preserve the Honour of the Capital." They were told *inter alia* (what indeed cannot have been a secret to most of them) that "hooligans and thieves poison the lives of honest people and do not permit them to work quietly and confidently. Inhabitants of Moscow unfortunately cannot always be certain that danger does not lie in wait for them." It was disclosed on this occasion that "the great majority of those detained by the militia are young workers, employees, and students of higher educational establishments . . . in eighty per cent. of all cases drink is the cause of crime. . . ." [7a]

In reporting such cases, the Soviet press frequently assumes a tone of incredulity which strikes the foreign observer as naive. How, it is asked indignantly, are such phenomena to be explained? Did these young workers perchance not receive a proper education in the *Komsomol*, and if so why not? How is one to account for the fact that former alumni of institutions for the study of Marxism-Leninism take up the profession of seller of pornographic literature? [8] The usual reply is that either the parents or the collective (school or factory) have been at fault. The question whether youthful lawlessness—from the harmless antics of the *stilyagi* with their craze for "decadent" jazz, to the murderous activities of drunken hooligans—may not be rooted in the prevailing social conditions is naturally not raised.

On occasions the border-line between upper-class and lower-class criminality is blurred, *e.g.*, in the recent arrest of sixteen youthful offspring of well-to-do Moscow families for armed robbery. In demanding to know what turned these privileged

[7a] Moscow Radio, October 13, 1956.
[8] *Cf. Smena*, 1956, No. 19, "Without Definite Occupation."

youngsters into criminals, *Pravda* [9] came to the conclusion that their parents were to blame for having spoiled them. This theme leads straight to the other great topic of official moralising, *viz.*, the frequently scandalous behaviour of the "golden youth." Last August *Komsomolskaya Pravda* reported the arrest of three young ladies—the daughters respectively of a General, an Air Force Colonel and a high-ranking officer of the Political Police—on charges of theft and depravity. Their male associates were identified as Evgeny Kabanov and Sergei Petukhov—both the sons of Ministers and members of the Central Committee. At the trial last October the two boys got off scot-free, while the girls received one-year sentences under an article of the Criminal Code which normally lays down a five-year minimum penalty. The court on this occasion "took into account the youth of the accused, their plea of guilty, and the fact that they were first offenders." The leniency of the sentences attracted some attention, and B. A. Boldyrev, a Deputy General Procurator, subsequently announced [10] that they would be revised and presumably stiffened. The two boys do not seem to have appeared in court at all, and their record has not been discussed at Moscow University—a fact which throws a revealing light on the existence of unofficial privileges in the USSR.

[9] September 14, 1956.
[10] *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, December 8, 1956.

23

UNEASY YOUTH

THE ferment among Soviet students found dramatic and, from the viewpoint of the authorities, disquieting expression in the elections of Komsomol functionaries which took place in most Soviet institutions of higher learning during December, 1956. From accounts published in the Soviet press it appears that the "election campaign" among student Komsomol groups had a character "not experienced before," in view of the "democratisation of life." [1] General criticism was voiced with regard to the Komsomol's work in the past, and in many cases—probably a majority—there was pressure to elect new local leaders. In response to this ferment the Party authorities urged that established functionaries should not be condemned out of hand, but should be given another chance, even if they had made mistakes. In this connection, "demagogues and phrasemongers" among the students "who do not want to advance the common cause, but are trying to spread scepticism" came under fire.[2] They were charged with voicing general demands (presumably for a lessening of political controls) instead of urging specific remedies for practical problems. The tendency to boycott political indoctrination courses which is reported to have spread in recent months, is obliquely reflected in the editorial pen-picture of the typical student "demagogue."

"He may advocate a boycott of the communal dining room, instead of joining the commission for improving the food. He may demand the discussion of some problem, and then participate not in order to clarify the subject, but to cause disturbance and spread confusion. He tends to shirk lectures, and at the same time complains about the unsatisfactory state of teaching." All Komsomol authorities are solemnly put on guard against "the loud and empty phrases of the demagogue."

[1] *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, December 15, 1956.
[2] *Ibid.*

Behind these superficial manifestations of student unrest lies the ideological trouble to which the Soviet press began to draw attention in mid-December with a series of reports on " unhealthy ideological tendencies." *Tass* [3] reported a special resolution of the Leningrad Komsomol executive referring to certain undefined incidents at the local pedagogical institute. Two days later *Pravda* in its turn complained about unhealthy symptoms in a number of other institutions of higher learning, such as the Leningrad Polytechnic, the Conservatory and the Academy of Arts. In the latter place the students had voiced mistaken opinions about the place of the artist in society. This was due to faulty leadership and inadequate ideological instruction. To remedy these weaknesses *Pravda* hinted at stricter controls and new regulations to ensure the recruitment of a higher percentage of students direct from the factories. Student unrest is also a feature of reports from the Baltic republics and other parts of the Union. In this connection the Minister of Health and the Minister of Justice in Estonia were criticised by the local Komsomol leadership for lack of contact with the students. " Who can doubt that (through direct contact) much confusion could have been cleared up. . . . What could be more important than work among students in a town like Tartu? " [4]

The official reaction to this unrest has so far taken the form of an attempt to set the workers against the students. In his address to a youthful audience in Moscow last November (the full text of which has not become available) Khrushchev referred to an alleged incident in Rumania, " where the workers " were supposed to have told rebellious students " You are studying at our expense and should behave accordingly," the implication being that something like " workers' control " should be introduced in the universities. This hint seems to have been followed up, for *Partiinaya Zhizn*,[5] in an editorial expressing concern at the situation in the universities, stresses the " educational value " of " recent meetings between students, workers and kolkhozniks." The journal mentions the " invitation " extended to a

[3] December 14, 1956.
[4] *Partiinaya Zhizn*, 1956, No. 22.
[5] 1956, No. 22.

group of workers by the students of the Ural polytechnic institute, and a similar meeting in Moscow, where the students were lectured on their responsibilities. Editorially, the same paper makes the familiar plea for stricter discipline and more political education. The complaint is voiced that some professors and teachers are indifferent to ideological matters, while others confine themselves to quoting from the approved texts and dismiss as " non-Marxist or anti-Party " all critical questions, or take refuge in the past and decline to deal with topical problems. A letter from a Leningrad lecturer is cited as evidence of systematic evasiveness on the part of the academic staff when confronted with awkward questions. The editorials see a danger here. " If the student is given no answer to his inquiries on matters that interest him, he will none the less continue to search for one. To avoid answering questions on subjects of concern to students is to open the way for all kinds of false rumours, to weaken the struggle against the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology which reaches our country by way of the radio, the press, etc. That is why it is necessary to take up the questions raised by our youth and where necessary . . . to unmask publicly the inner inconsistency of mistaken views."

The current wave of questioning is not confined to the USSR. The Polish and Hungarian events have had a deep effect in the satellite countries. Here the Komsomol lacks the romantic revolutionary tradition on which it can still draw in the Soviet Union. Adherence to the monopolistic " State youth organisations " in post-1945 Eastern Europe not only had no romantic appeal, but was a recognised path to preferment. The leaders of the Polish Communist youth organisation (the ZMP) conceded as far back as the spring of 1956 that careerism had become rife in their ranks, since " membership gives certain advantages to young people," while on the other hand " the most active . . . and creative elements " engage in activities outside the ZMP ranks.[6]

There appears to have been a fairly widespread student movement in Prague, and throughout Czechoslovakia, in April and May, 1956, which was stifled by the authorities before it

[6] *Sztandar Mlodych*, April 11, 1956.

could voice openly political slogans. The demands voiced on that occasion—mainly for greater academic freedom and less compulsory Russian—were rejected, and some arrests seem to have been made. In late autumn the Polish and Hungarian events caused a stir in Eastern Germany, and it was against this background that the students of the East Berlin Humboldt University are said to have boycotted meetings called by the Party leaders at which they were to have been lectured, *more Sovietico*, by " groups of workers " who had suddenly developed a spontaneous interest in what was going on at the universities. It was presumably with this reaction in mind that the East German Party Secretary, Walter Ulbricht, published an " open letter " in the December number of the student magazine *Forum* in which he appealed for discipline and urged the students to follow the instructions of the academic authorities and give no hearing to " trouble-makers " characterised by him, in good Prussian fashion, as demagogues and corrosive critics of the established order.

The common denominator in these various manifestations of intellectual unrest appears to be dissatisfaction with the official ideology, notably the extent to which it fails to reflect the reality of Soviet life. In the East European countries this criticism is reinforced by national dislike of the USSR, and especially the constant and compulsory glorification of the Soviet " way of life." In the non-Russian parts of the Union too national *motifs* appear to be of some importance, as when *Sovetskaya Latvia* (Riga) complains that the students in Riga seem to obtain their information about various events from non-Soviet sources. The most recent issue of *Molodoi Kommunist* [7] criticises the Komsomol organisations of the Baltic republics for not sufficiently combating manifestations of bourgeois nationalism.

As reports about the " unsatisfactory state of affairs in the universities " became more and more frequent towards the end of December, 1956, and early January, 1957, leading party institutions such as for instance the Moscow committee were specially convened to cope with the situation. " Your criticism will be exploited by the enemy " has become the main argument

[7] December, 1956.

to stifle political discussions among the student youth. Hence the necessity to reimpose strict controls and not to permit even the slightest deviations. This emerged from a long "open letter to Mr. Allan Dulles" by four Moscow students (prominently featured in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* [7a]) in which they reiterated their absolute loyalty to the Party leadership, stating that some of their comrades were "devoting too much time to the present discussions," and implying that their heart-searching was playing into the hands of Western intelligence services.

This argument has been ridiculed more than once. In a recent novel by M. Bremener in *Yunost*, the Soviet youth literary magazine,[8] we have a scene in a Soviet school where a snowball is thrown into the classroom by way of a ventilation shaft. Chmelik, one of the pupils, shouts "bomb" and his behaviour is treated as an act of political sabotage by the teacher who in her long tirade describes him as an adherent of the Atlantic Pact and an enemy of the people. However, poking fun at time-honoured practices is always somewhat risky and Bremener's novel has come in for heavy criticism in the Soviet teachers' organ. Far from discarding this old technique, it has been used in recent weeks with fresh vigour. The spy scare of 1951–52 has partially been renewed. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* published [9] a long report in many instalments on the activities of "enemy agents" allegedly flown in by the Americans into White Russia. Entitled "Square B 52," complete with illustrations, it appeals for a larger measure of vigilance. The same point is stressed in various articles, frequently by police officials (such as, for instance, Ernst Wollweber, the East German secret police chief, in *Pravda* [10]) calling upon the students to resist any ideological "softening up" which, according to this authoritative source, is the main aim of international reaction at the present stage.

These appeals recall (sometimes literally) the exhortations of the pillars of Tsarist society (such as the police and the Church) urging the students of 1900 to resist subversive ideas and to

[7a] December 26, 1956.
[8] October, 1956.
[9] Beginning December 19, 1956.
[10] December 26, 1956.

remain loyal. In all these cases, the impression that the authorities are somehow not in touch with the younger generation appears to be the aspect which most alarms the Party bureacracy and those speaking in its name.

24

EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS

By S. V. Utechin

THE current phase in the development of secondary education in the USSR dates essentially from before Stalin's death. It was introduced in 1949–50 and formally proclaimed at the XIXth Party Congress in 1952. Though Stalin's death and the events that followed it have to some extent influenced the field of education, the prevailing trend has not altered.

Compulsory "Secondary" Education

The most spectacular feature of the educational policy inaugurated with the beginning of the fifth Five-Year Plan in 1950, and officially proclaimed at the XIXth Party Congress, was the transition from compulsory seven-year schooling to so-called universal secondary education. This transition was to be achieved gradually so that secondary education should become compulsory throughout the country by 1960.

Several considerations seem likely to have contributed to this decision. It was clearly valuable propagandistically, as fulfilling the pledge made in the 1919 Party programme (officially still in force) that universal education should be provided up to the age of 17, as a sign of the Party's "care for the people," and as a demonstration that progress is being made towards Communism. At the same time, it was useful from the purely practical point of view, since the mechanisation of the country's economy, as to quantity and complexity of mechanical equipment, has almost reached the stage where a good general educational background becomes essential for the skilled worker. Finally, it cannot have been irrelevant that this transition would be comparatively cheap. As a result of the war, the slow post-war demobilisation, and

what must have been a devastating famine in 1946–47, the birth-rate was very low until 1948 and it could be foreseen that for years to come the increase in numbers in the upper forms of the secondary schools would not raise the total number of children at school. In fact, the number of pupils in the first seven classes fell from 32·4 million in 1940–41 to 31·7 million in 1950–51, 24·3 million in 1954–55 and 22·9 million in 1955–56.[1]

The transition to universal secondary education, which was first decreed in some 200 major towns, was vigorously pursued and the number of pupils in the eighth-tenth classes, which had fallen from 2·37 million in 1940–41 to 1·5 million in 1950–51, rose rapidly until 1954–55, when it was 5·14 million, and continued to rise the following year, though more slowly, to 5·25 million.[2] In 1955, 62 per cent. of those who finished seven classes in the RSFSR went on to the eighth class (in towns 85·9 per cent., in the country 45·8 per cent.).[3] As the completion of secondary school had been traditionally regarded as the direct route to higher education—highly valued in the Soviet Union—the conversion of many seven-class schools into full secondary schools was welcomed by the pupils and their parents. This is not to say that the expansion of secondary education encountered no obstacles. The 1940 decree introducing fees in the three upper forms of secondary schools was still in force and no grants of any kind were available. In many cases parents could neither afford to maintain their children for another three years at school, nor to lose the money they would otherwise be earning. This led to a situation where, although the 1940 decree was not formally abolished, local Soviets were allowed to grant exemption from paying the fees to families who could not afford them. However, this exemption had to be applied for by the principal of the school concerned and not by individual parents, and the

[1] Figures from *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR*, Moscow, 1956, p. 224.

[2] The total number of pupils at primary and general secondary schools has fallen from 34·8 m. in 1940–1941 to 33·3 m. in 1950–1951, 29·6 m. in 1954–1955 and 28·2 m. in 1955–1956 (*ibid.*). In all cases the figures do not include pupils at adult schools though the totals given in this footnote include pupils at special schools for physically or mentally handicapped children.

[3] N. K. Goncharov, *Sovetskaya Shkola v Shestoy Pyatiletke*, Moscow, 1956, pp. 3–4.

scheme—in itself strictly speaking illegal—did not function satisfactorily. Another legal snag to the expansion was the continued existence of a decree which bound *kolkhoz* children from the age of twelve to put in a certain quota of work on the *kolkhozes* each year, an obligation which frequenlty interfered with school work. Moreover, the transition to universal secondary education was undertaken at a time when even the compulsory seven-year schooling could not be completely enforced because of the generally poor material conditions, particularly in the countryside.[4] It has, for example, been stated by the head of the Chief Administration of Schools in the Ministry of Education of the RSFSR that during the school year 1955–56 not a single region of the Republic achieved school attendance by all children between seven and fifteen.[5]

The consequences of the expansion of general secondary education were first felt by those schools which had competed for pupils with the general secondary schools—the professional secondary schools and the trade schools. Next to feel the impact of expanding secondary education were the higher educational establishments. In the past the great majority of people who completed secondary school went straight to these institutions. Anyone finishing secondary school satisfactorily could reasonably expect to receive higher education. But since 1950 the expansion of higher education has been negligible in comparison with the increase in number of those finishing secondary school. While the latter has risen from 290,000 in 1951 to 1·1 million in 1955, the number of students (excluding correspondence students) admitted to higher educational establishments has risen from 237,000 in 1950 to only 285,000 in 1955.[6] Thus a new problem was created of selecting people for admission to the higher educational establishments.

At first it was not realised by the people at large that this discrepancy was a matter of deliberate policy on the part of the

[4] It must be remembered that although there were no fees in the seven-year schools, textbooks, writing materials, etc., all had (and still have) to be bought by parents.

[5] *Uchitelskaya Gazeta*, December 1, 1956; *cf.* also *ibid.*, September 15, 1956 for the current school year.

[6] *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo SSSR*, pp. 224, 228. Of the latter figure, only 257,000 were full-time students (*Pravda*, August 21, 1955).

authorities, and those who failed to gain admission to higher educational establishments tended to regard it simply as bad luck, and to mark time and try again the following year; in Sevastopol, for example, this category covered 30 per cent. of those who had finished secondary school in 1954. Yet, however improbable it may sound, there was no specific law in the Soviet Union (nor is there now) compelling such people to work, nor any institution whose function it would be to implement the general principle embodied in the Constitution—that he who does not work shall not eat. A concerted propaganda campaign was therefore initiated to persuade the would-be students to take up manual jobs in industry or agriculture. Many were semi-compulsorily recruited for the cultivation of the virgin lands or for the building projects in the East and North. But this only alleviated, without solving, the problem of juvenile unemployment. Having resigned themselves to taking up manual work, hundreds of thousands of secondary school-leavers are now finding it difficult to obtain a job.[7]

In the first place, there are no Labour Exchanges in the Soviet Union; secondly, managements dislike taking on these troublesome eighteen-year-old young people who are likely to want to leave at the first opportunity they may have of further education; and thirdly, of course, they have no sort of technical or skilled qualifications. It is true that so-called technical schools were set up in 1954 where they could be trained in a one-year course as skilled workers. These technical schools, however, have not so far been particularly successful; of the 60,000 pupils who were admitted to them in the first year [8] only 27,000 completed the course.[9] The target for the next year, originally set at 150,000,[10] was reduced to under 100,000 later in the year.[11]

The XXth Party Congress brought about certain changes of policy in regard to the expansion of secondary education. On the one hand, one of the main obstacles to the expansion of secondary education has been removed, with the abolition of

[7] *Cf. Literary Gazette*, November 20, 1956.
[8] *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, August 2, 1955.
[9] *Narodnoe Khozyaistvo*, p. 197.
[10] *Izvestia*, February 4, 1955.
[11] *Ibid.*, December 27, 1955.

school fees from the beginning of the current academic year. On the other hand it was stated that universal secondary education would be *in essentials* achieved by 1960, instead of being completely achieved. The decision to slow the process may have been taken several months before the Congress; this would explain the relatively small increase in the number of children in the three top forms in 1955. But more important is the fact that the very idea of universal secondary education underwent a change. Whereas before the Congress it had been interpreted as meaning that by 1960 all pupils would go through the ten classes of the general secondary school, it was now stated by Khrushchev that they would go either through a general secondary or through a professional secondary school of some kind. This amounted to lowering the age of specialisation for a proportion of the pupils from seventeen, as originally envisaged, to fourteen. But it also provided a welcome opening for the discussion of desirable types of secondary education. The most interesting contribution to this discussion so far was made in an article in the *Literary Gazette* of December 1, 1956. The article advocates two further changes in the present policy; first that the number of professional secondary schools should be greatly increased to provide places for all who wish to go to them after seven years of general school. Secondly, that secondary schools should—as in the past—more or less regard themselves as preparing pupils for higher education, and that they should be divided into three streams—arts, technical, and biological. All three streams, however, should also to some extent prepare their pupils for practical work by means of " polytechnicalisation."

The " polytechnicalisation " of primary and secondary general education was the second startling feature of the educational policy announced at the XIXth Party Congress in 1952. The idea itself was not new. The concept of polytechnical education is deeply entrenched in the Marxist political tradition. Marx himself maintained that there should be technical instruction in the basic principles of all production processes, and that the child or adolescent should be taught to handle the simplest tools of all branches of industry. In Russia this demand for

polytechnical education was included in the Communist Party Programme of 1919. When a discussion developed among Communist educationists in the 1920s on the subject of polytechnical versus mono-technical education, it was again the former idea that prevailed.

But the efforts to implement this idea during the twenties were unsuccessful; various forms of it were tried out and the culminating point was reached with the idea of the "withering away of the school," and with attempts to transfer all education to the factories. The result was a complete disorganisation of the educational process, and from 1931–32 the Central Committee of the Party embarked upon a policy of restoration of the traditional forms and content of school education. During the next two decades, emphasis in the schools curricula was increasingly laid on the humanities and on the theoretical aspects of the sciences. So little value was placed on the whole practical aspect of education that in 1937 all handicrafts, carpentry and mechanical training were banned by the Central Committee from the school curricula.

The XIXth Party Congress brought about another *volte-face* : polytechnical education was again to be introduced throughout the country. This time the motives seem to have been utilitarian rather than ideological. If still greater efforts were to be directed towards rapid industrial expansion, what was needed above all was not more pupils who would appreciate Pushkin and Blok —and possibly even Shakespeare and Schiller—but people able to drive a tractor, to repair a lorry and to instal electric wiring. The changes began in 1953, with a considerable cut in the amount of material to be learned in history, economic geography, biology, and foreign languages. In 1954 new cuts were made in most theoretical subjects: they were particularly severe in the Russian language and literature departments, history, psychology, logic, and foreign languages. Then in August, 1955, a new curriculum was published which was intended to remain in force for at least five years. The following table shows the most significant changes in the number of hours per week devoted by classes 1–10 to particular subjects:

	Before 1953	1955–56
Russian language and literature ...	92½	84½
Mathematics	64	60
History and Constitution of the USSR ...	23½	21
Logic	2	0
Foreign language	22	20
Geography	16	14½
Biology	13½	12
Psychology	2	1
Physics	14½	16½
Handicrafts, agricultural, mechanical, etc., training	0	16

The curtailment of time spent on Russian language and literature, geography and biology was spread evenly over the whole curriculum; the cuts in mathematics affected the junior classes, in history the middle classes, while those in psychology and foreign language applied to the senior classes; it is in the latter, too, that the complete loss of logic, the increase in physics (with strong emphasis upon laboratory work and practical application), and the newly introduced practical training in agriculture, machine construction and electro-mechanics were mostly felt. Typical of the reduction in the material to be learned is the fact that the number of words of a foreign language that the pupil is supposed to acquire was cut from three thousand five hundred to two thousand six hundred. Although this curriculum was intended to remain stable for five years, a further change was made this year for the three upper forms in some schools as an experiment. Instead of " practical training in agriculture, machine construction and electro-mechanics," two separate subjects have been introduced: a theoretical one—" the fundamentals of production "—and practical work in industry and agriculture. Two-and-a-half times the number of hours is to be allocated to these subjects than was allowed for the " practical training " last year.

Apart from these manipulations with the school curricula, little progress has been made so far in implementing the idea of polytechnical education. The obstacles are essentially the same as they were in the 1920s. Nobody really knows what the

pupils should learn; the teachers have for the most part no idea of any technical subject, and at best very vague notions about the practical application of scientific theories; specially engaged instructors from industry, on the other hand, are at best qualified for training apprentices, but many of them are simply skilled workers with no knowledge whatever of teaching; the schools have little technical equipment [12] and few plots of land for agricultural work, and it is not easy to obtain them—all the authorities have done in this respect is to allow the managers of factories, and Machine and Tractor Stations, to give away to the schools such old and outworn equipment as they have no use for. It has recently been stated that in the majority of schools of the RSFSR polytechnical education is by no means carried out as it should be, and that, indeed, some schools have made no attempts at it at all.[13]

It seems that the majority of teachers welcome the "polytechnical" turn in education to some extent (though naturally there are opponents who are alleged to be trying to sabotage the whole scheme): that is, they welcome the opportunity for their pupils to acquaint themselves with some of the practical applications of scientific knowledge in industry and agriculture, and to acquire such practical skills as are useful in modern industrial society. But they are being driven further than they would like to go by a combined pressure from above and below. On the one hand, children (and their parents too) have realised by now that for the majority general secondary education can no longer lead to higher education, and they are therefore anxious to acquire some definite technical skill while still at school; on the other hand, the general Khrushchevian policy of trying to re-create the social and political climate of the First Five Year Plan era has encouraged in the educational administration those people who would also like to revive the educational tendencies and trends current at that period. Since the local educational authorities and the principals of individual schools are given

[12] *e.g.*, in over 116,000 schools in the RSFSR there were only some 14,000 workrooms and workshops at the beginning of the 1955–56 school year. (*Kulturnoe Stroitelstvo SSSR*, Moscow, 1956, p. 40, and Goncharov, *op. cit.*, p. 4.)

[13] *Uchitelskaya Gazeta*, December 1, 1956.

a certain amount of freedom in the way they implement the " polytechnicalisation," various trends of development are apparent, of which two are particularly clearly discernible. One can be called Ukrainian and is in fact a return to the monotechnical position adopted by education authorities in the Ukraine during the twenties. In its present experimental form, applied in several hundred Ukrainian schools and also in some elsewhere, it has meant the extension of the general secondary course from ten years to eleven (finishing at eighteen instead of seventeen) and the inclusion of full apprenticeship in a trade within the curriculum. The second of the two more radical trends is the revival of the idea of " socially useful work " as the right approach to polytechnical education: in practice this means that there is strong pressure on urban schools to work in the *kolkhozes* and *sovkhozes* during vacations, and on country schools to work regularly in the *kolkhozes*; in term-time, urban schools are encouraged to arrange for their pupils to work in factories.

The main effect of " polytechnicalisation " upon the educational system is the destruction of secondary education as traditionally understood, with the resulting problem of how to prepare suitable candidates for higher education, scholarship, and the learned professions. It is possible that this latter problem may partially be solved by the creation of boarding schools.

The idea of establishing boarding schools was first announced by Khrushchev in his main report at the XXth Party Congress. Boarding schools had been well known in Russia before the Revolution, either as privileged schools on English public school lines—such as the famous Lycée in Tsarskoye Selo, the Pages' Corps, and the Institutes for Noble Girls, or else as professional schools, such as the theological seminaries, teachers' seminaries, and military schools. After the Revolution and the Civil War, the practice was revived to cater for the very large numbers of orphans and *bezprizorny* children, and again attracted many of the best teachers, such as A. S. Makarenko. The situation was similar after the Second World War, which again produced many orphans. The pre-revolutionary Military Cadet Corps were

resuscitated in the form of the Suvorov and Nakhimov schools. Finally, a number of secondary boarding schools have existed in recent years in regions and republics that have a scattered population in the countryside. But no particular attention was given to these boarding schools, which existed, as it were, on the fringes of the educational system.

In his report at the XXth Congress, Khrushchev quite unexpectedly produced the idea that it was advisable to imitate the ruling classes in capitalist countries, who use boarding schools for the education of their young. This suggestion was included in the comprehensive "decision" of the Congress on Khrushchev's report. The Government decided to open the first new boarding schools in the 1956–57 school year, and the subject was under continuous discussion in educational circles and in the press for several months. In September the Central Committee of the Party and the Council of Ministers, in a common decision (which has not yet been published in full), laid down the main lines along which these schools must be developed.

It seems that in the process of its discussion and implementation, the original idea has undergone certain modifications. Khrushchev's picture of what the boarding schools should be like clearly suggested that they should be reserved for a minority. They were to be situated in particularly healthy and pleasant surroundings, to have exceptionally well-qualified and devoted teachers, to be entirely voluntary and to be financed to a considerable extent by the fees paid by the pupils' parents. In the process of discussion, however, with the increasing general tendency in official circles to return to the ideas of the 1920s, this original picture has been blurred. It appears now that the leading Party and Government circles have decided to consider boarding schools as the basic form of education in the future—an idea that had many adherents in the twenties but seemed to have been completely dropped for many years. In consequence, the main emphasis is now laid on Communist indoctrination, "socially useful work," and trade apprenticeship, a definite provision has been made for allocating to these schools

—unlike the ordinary secondary schools—plots of land and the necessary mechanical equipment.

Three hundred-odd boarding schools were opened at the beginning of the current school year through the conversion of suitable ordinary school buildings, and this will be the usual procedure at any rate for the next few years, annexes being built for dormitories where necessary. The schools are co-educational and may admit day pupils. Orphans and the children of poor parents are to be maintained and educated free; for the rest, the fees are graded according to the parents' means. The State is to cover the bulk of the costs. Most schools opened so far cover either the first four or seven classes, but it is intended that they should all develop into full secondary schools. In the discussion during the summer there was much talk of boarding schools catering in the future not only for school-age children, but also including kindergartens and even crêches. The internal organisation of a boarding school has been much discussed, and here considerable attention has been given to foreign experience, particularly the English public school.[14] Some of the features of the latter, such as the house system and the arrangement of the pupil's day, are considered interesting and valuable examples that deserve close study and possibly imitation.

It is intended that by 1960 the total number of children at boarding schools should exceed one million. The voluntary principle is still retained, but there are so far no indications that the boarding schools are offering better educational opportunities. However, the directors and staff of individual boarding schools are apparently less rigidly dictated to by the Ministry of Education than is the case in the ordinary secondary schools, so that there may be a greater diversity between different boarding schools. This greater freedom may extend to such matters as methods of teaching (allowing, for example, for the introduction of a semi-tutorial form for older pupils), and even the curriculum. In this way, it may still be possible that some of the boarding schools, with children from better-off families, will—under pressure from the parents—develop into schools of

[14] *Sovetskaya Pedagogika*, June, 1956; *Uchitelskaya Gazeta*, May 9, 1956.

a rather superior type which would clearly prepare their pupils for the universities.

The next main problem now being tackled is that of " overcoming the effects of the cult of personality." This means, in the first instance, the elimination of the cult of Stalin. " From the first day at school our children were brought up in the spirit of genuflection to the personality of J. V. Stalin," wrote *Uchitelskaya Gazeta* on August 22, 1956. " The idea was daily inculcated into the schoolchildren that their happy childhood had been created only by him, and precisely he had given them the right to education. All the victories gained by the Soviet people, both in the struggle against enemies and in creative work, were explained only by the genius and wisdom of one man." All this has now to be replaced, particularly in the teaching of history and literature, by efforts " to form in the pupils' minds a correct idea of the process of historical development, of the role of the popular masses in this process, of the relation between the individual and society, of the historic role of the great Lenin, and of the Communist Party as the leader and organiser of the Soviet people in its struggle for the construction of socialism." [15]

This change has created considerable disorganisation in school work. At the end of the last academic year no history examinations were held in the tenth class. In the current academic year all classes from the fourth upwards are affected. In the fourth class there will be no history or literary readings for the first half of the year, because the textbooks have been withdrawn and the revised ones are not ready. The textbook on the history of the USSR for the tenth class has also been withdrawn, but history is nevertheless to be taught—without a textbook. The textbooks for the other classes have been re-issued without alterations, and now the teachers are told that they must treat certain subjects in a different way from that of the textbooks. A pamphlet by Academician A. M. Pankratova [16] explains that the textbooks (her own !) contain faults and mistakes which should be eliminated in the teaching. These

[15] *Ibid.*, August 22, 1956.
[16] Summarised in *Uchitelskaya Gazeta*, September 22, 1956.

" mistakes " are said to be the exaggeration of the importance and the qualities of certain Russian princes and Tsars and a playing down of the class character of their policies; the underestimation of the role of the popular masses in all historical achievements of the Russian State; a whitewashing of the imperialist and colonialist policy of the Russian Government towards non-Russian peoples of the empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and in particular a wrong interpretation of the Caucasian peoples' struggle under Shamil; and, of course, a gross exaggeration of the historical role of Stalin. It is clear from this summary that " overcoming the personality cult " in the teaching of history means a return to the basic historical views of M. N. Pokrovsky and his school.

Finally, it is stated that " during the last years of J. V. Stalin's life, Lenin's directives about education began to be forgotten, to be pushed into the background. People began to forget also the very valuable works on education by N. K. Krupskaya. It is necessary to put a decisive end to this kind of attitude towards Lenin's heritage." [17]

All this makes it evident that the tendencies which we have described as a return to the conditions and views of the 1920s can be developed under the officially fashionable slogan of " overcoming the cult of personality."

The post-Stalin " thaw," which in the field of education started very late and has so far produced very little, has resulted in one important problem being raised—that of the overburdening of schoolchildren. On May 10, 1956, a group of leading medical authorities published a long letter in the *Literary Gazette*, stating that over a number of years they had observed the grave consequences of the " unbelievable overburdening " of schoolchildren. Children of eleven to thirteen years work on average eight to ten hours a day (including homework); children of fourteen to seventeen ten to twelve hours. The overwhelming majority of the upper forms of secondary schools not only have no time left for reading, sport, theatre, or amusement, but so little time is left even for sleep that an industrious pupil becomes irreparably exhausted mentally. The

[17] *Ibid.*, August 22, 1956.

doctors stated that they had appealed to the Ministry of Education and to the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, but had failed to achieve anything positive. They were now appealing to the public and to the press and suggesting lines along which a remedy should be sought—including making use of the experience of "our foreign colleagues."

The problem was discussed at several conferences and in the press, but no suggestion for a genuine solution was advanced, and the authorities confined themselves to promises of further minor cuts in programmes of work. Suddenly, however, at the beginning of September, the RSFSR Minister of Education, Afanasenko, ordered that from the current year the end-of-year examinations are to be abolished in all classes but the seventh and the tenth,[18] and the examinations for these two classes are to be simplified and made easier.[19] Instead of the examinations, pupils will be promoted from one class to another simply on the basis of the marks they have received during the past year and their teachers' reports. This reform, which undoubtedly will be followed in the other republics, does go some way towards lessening the burden of work and the nervous strain under which the industrious pupil lives, though it does not solve the problem of the daily amount of work that has to be got through during most of the school year. On the other hand, it is yet another important step in the undermining of the traditional secondary school which had been restored in the two decades before 1952.

[18] *Uchitelskaya Gazeta*, September 8, 1956.
[19] Although a new subject for examination has been introduced in the tenth class—a foreign language.

Part Four

Beyond the Soviet Frontiers

25

ASIA IN THE SOVIET MIRROR, 1955–56 *

THE theme of this section is provided by certain important developments that have taken place during the past year, and more particularly during the past six months, in the Soviet approach to contemporary Asian affairs. It is based exclusively on Soviet sources, specifically on books and periodicals written and published during the post-Stalin era.

The past thirty-eight years have witnessed repeated and profound changes in the official Soviet-Communist attitude towards non-Communist nationalist movements in Asia and Africa. An era of relentless hostility (1928–34) was succeeded by one of close co-operation and sympathy (1935–39), and there have been further changes during the succeeding years. It is not intended here to raise the question whether the current approach is destined to be more permanent than previous phases, whether, that is to say, it accords more closely with ultimate Soviet intentions. Such questions are best considered against the background of the entire period since 1917. In general, however, it may be said that Soviet historical writing on Asia and Africa has invariably displayed a close connection with the exigencies of the USSR's foreign policy. There appears to be no reason why this state of affairs should alter substantially in the near future, and it is thus by no means certain that the current official approach will still be maintained five or ten years from now.

What can be said with certainty today is that a new phase is about to open. Soviet Orientalism has of late come in for severe criticism, culminating in Mikoyan's remarks at the XXth Communist Party Congress last February. His words are worth quoting textually:

> Another institute within the framework of the Academy of Sciences studies the problems of the East. Yet all that can

* Chap. 25 first appeared in *Soviet Survey*, 1956, Nos. 4–5.

> be said of it is that, while the entire East has awakened in our time, the Institute goes on dozing contentedly; it is about time that it should lift itself to the standard required in our day.

Similar criticisms have been voiced of the work done by other specialised institutions concerned with contemporary Asian and African affairs. They are now stated to have overlooked the implications of the change in Soviet foreign policy during the past year, notably the efforts made to establish closer contact with Asian, Middle Eastern, and African countries. There has in fact for some time been a distinct hiatus between the Soviet Government's efforts to improve relations with Asian and African political leaders, and the tone of writing favoured by the more or less scholarly journals published in the USSR. It can hardly be supposed that they were blind to what was occurring in the political field, and yet these writers continued to subject the Soviet Government's Asian and African interlocutors to criticism and abuse in the approved orthodox manner —possibly from a belief that the political changes were merely tactical and did not require any doctrinal modifications.

Although this assumption may prove well-founded in the long run, it has clearly become embarrassing for the Soviet Government to have to bear responsibility for undiluted abuse of Mr. Nehru and Colonel Nasser, not to mention other figures. As early as May, 1955, an unsigned editorial in *Kommunist*, the official Party organ, stated that Soviet writers had been guilty of exaggeration in denouncing movements such as Kemalism in Turkey and Gandhism in India. At about the same time an attempt was made to amend matters by publishing Nehru's *Discovery of India*, a work favourably reviewed upon its belated appearance in translation. On the whole, however, the new approach has not yet found substantial expression.

In what follows an attempt is made to survey the field, with special reference to three distinct themes: (*a*) Soviet views on Asian and African questions, as reflected in literature published in 1954–55; (*b*) The contents of *Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie*, the new periodical specially devoted to Asian and African studies, which has been appearing since April, 1955; (*c*) An analysis of

the most recent trends in Soviet writing on this subject, including literature published during the past few weeks.

Soviet studies published during this period were characterised by a decidedly hostile tone towards non-Communist nationalist movements in Asia and Africa, including their left-of-centre and socialist groupings (" national reformism "). The following examples, chosen more or less at random, are none the less characteristic:

Surveying the development of the Japanese labour movement in the 1920s, the Soviet authors specialising in this field tended to reach the not very original conclusion that the Socialist leaders " daily betrayed the interests of the workers." [1] The " Sakai Minsoto " is described as a semi-Fascist party which did its utmost to split the labour movement.[2] According to another author, all the so-called Socialist parties of the period were in fact pro-Fascist.[3] The writer holds that even after the exodus of the most rabidly pro-Fascist elements (the Akmatsu), the Socialist leaders (including the " centrists ") continued in the service of Japanese imperialism.

There is a similar appraisal of Socialist activities in the post-war period: the Socialist leaders once more saw their main task in the division of the working-class movement. Such figures as Katayama, Asida and others, however, were before long " unmasked and discredited." They are described as having " betrayed the vital interests of the Japanese people " and being " in no way different from the other reactionary parties." " The Socialist party again fell into the hands of the opportunist social-chauvinist elements who in their day gave support to Japanese aggression." [4]

The author of a detailed study of " the anti-democratic agrarian reform " carried out in Japan after 1945 is equally sparing with praise of the Socialists. " The Socialist leaders fawned like lackeys upon the American imperialists." [5] Hirano,

[1] *Noveishaya Istoria Stran Zarubezhnovo Vostoka*, 2 vols., Moscow University, 1954–56, I, p. 147.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 156.
[3] Ch. T. Eidus, *Ocherki novoi i noveishei Istorii Yaponii*, Moscow, 1955, p. 176.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 251.
[5] *Uchenye Zapiski Instituta Vostokovedeniya*, VII, p. 54.

Nomidso, Okada, Inamura, and other Socialist leaders are charged with trying to split the peasant movement known as the "Nitino." Their chief crime apparently was to try to turn it into an instrument of the Socialist Party, whose "traitorous" activities are duly held up to execration.[6]

"National reformism," *i.e.*, the left-of-centre non-Communist national movement in Korea during the twenties and thirties, fares no better:

> National reformism in Korea was the ideology of the collaborationist bourgeoisie which, content with small favours, praised the Japanese régime which enabled it to share in the exploitation of the Korean people. The national reformists held back from the struggle for independence. . . . Through their youth, sports, and cultural organisations they tried to distract the masses from the struggle for independence. They became the chief aides of Japanese imperialism in the suppression of the national-revolutionary movement.[7]

The history of the independence movement in Burma after the Second World War is examined critically by A. N. Usyanov, who is particularly dissatisfied with the "Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League" for "ignoring the claims of the people to participate in the affairs of their country" while on the other hand "employing demagogic slogans."[8] The author believes that with the exodus of the Communists the League ceased to be the leading organ of national resistance. "It became 'national-reformist' and could only adopt the role of a loyal opposition to the imperialism of the British Labour Government. Leadership in the national movement passed to the Communists headed by Tan Tun," who proceeded to set up a national-democratic front. The AFPFL leaders are described as "traitors"; pressed by collaborators and capitulators, they despatched a good-will mission to London in 1947 under U Nu "which negotiated behind closed doors with the British." In January, 1948, Burma was proclaimed a sovereign independent republic, but in the author's view it none the less remained a semi-colonial dependency.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 125.
[7] *Istoria*, pp. 105–106.
[8] *Zapiski*, X, 247.

> The representatives of the democratic organisations in Burma [*i.e.*, the Communists], who express the views of the overwhelming majority of the people, stress that the mere fact of proclaiming the country independent has not brought Burma real independence, that Burma remains in effect a semi-colonial country dependent to a considerable degree on the British monopolies. At the third world congress of trade unions (the WFTU) in October, 1953, the representative of the Burmese workers, Tan Ngve, declared from the rostrum of the congress that " although Burma was declared independent in 1948, it remains in actual fact a semi-colonial country." [9]

During the period under review there was no relaxation of the traditional hostility towards the Indian national movement. In the first and second volumes of the newly published standard textbook, Gandhi is still described as a traitor,[10] who justified the country's oppression by the imperialists, never really wanted to attain independence, and acted throughout in the interests of the exploiting classes. The Baroda resolution of the Indian National Congress in 1922 (calling a halt to the anti-Government campaign, to avoid further violence) is described as " one of the most loathsome documents of Gandhi's treacherous activity." Gandhi " appealed to the religious prejudices of the masses and exploited the most reactionary doctrines of Hinduism."

The Congress party's " pseudo-left wing " then headed by Nehru fares no better. Even so progressive an action on its part as the decision to join the International Anti-Imperialist League in the late twenties is sourly denounced as a mere manoeuvre intended to bring pressure to bear on the British Government and thus create more favourable conditions for collaboration with British imperialism. The emergence of Nehru as a leading figure is attributed to the discrediting of the old leadership, which in consequence had to be replaced by a new, national-reformist, pseudo-leftist group.[11]

These " pseudo-leftists " ostensibly came out for full independence, for a united anti-imperialist front, and for a socialist republic which would satisfy the demands of the workers and

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 268.
[10] *Istoria*, I, pp. 188 *et seq.*
[11] *Zapiski*, X, pp. 46 *et seq.*

peasants, yet in reality they stood for the interests of the landowners and the bourgeoisie, helped to perpetuate various feudal remnants, and actively opposed the class struggles of workers and peasants. Nehru is specifically upbraided for his sponsorship of the Madras declaration adopted by the Congress party in 1927, "whose chief aim was to bolster the party's declining prestige." He is also accused of having demanded full independence for India without actually meaning it. At this point the writer is obliged to concede an error of his own:

> It must be said here that several Soviet experts on India, including the present writer, adopted a mistaken position in appraising the "leftist" leaders during the mid-thirties. In articles at the time these "leftists" were described as the real leaders of the petty-bourgeois (revolutionary) wing which had emerged at that time within the Congress party, and (therefore) as representatives of the national-revolutionary trend within the Indian national liberation movement. This was, of course, a mistake which has been shown up by experience.[12]

A few lines further on it is made clear that the Congress leaders mistakenly extolled during the mid-thirties were Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose.

A retrospective glance at the reforms introduced in Persia by Reza Shah leads *Istoria*[13] to describe them as "directed against the people." Reza Shah suppressed without mercy both the workers and peasants and the national strivings of the non-Persian minorities. Even stronger terms are reserved for Kemalism in Turkey. The reforms introduced by Kemal Ataturk are described as superficial and attuned to the interests of the Anatolian landowners and merchants. They helped to strengthen the position of the bourgeoisie, but did not remove feudal remnants from the countryside.

> The Kemalists lived in deadly fear of their own people. They suppressed in the cruellest manner the smallest manifestations of the democratic movement and the national-liberation movements of the non-Turkish minorities.[14]

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 46–47.
[13] p. 273.
[14] *Istoria*, I, p. 312.

The leaders of the "national bourgeoisie" in Syria and Lebanon appear in Soviet literature of the period under review as people who systematically sabotaged the fight against the French. After the outbreak of armed revolt in 1925 they attempted to exploit the rebels' successes "in order to obtain better terms for an arrangement with the imperialists. But at the first setback they betrayed the rebellion and hastened to announce their subservience to the occupants." [15] The collaborationist elements (the National Bloc and the People's Party) thereafter tried by every means to reach a compromise with imperialism.[16] In Egypt, the Wafd distinguished itself by demagogy coupled with oppression of the labour movement from the twenties onwards. Zaghlul and Nahas obediently executed the behests of the British imperialists.[17]

In this literature which antedates the latest political changes, developments in Egypt after 1952 are still viewed in the same manner. A leading specialist on Middle Eastern affairs reaches the conclusion that following the army coup "reaction grew even more intense." "All the democratic elements are being persecuted by the new rulers and their madly reactionary régime." The agrarian reform legislation is described as a demagogic manoeuvre. The Cairo junta is said to live in deadly fear of the people—its cruelty being the best evidence.[18] The July, 1954, agreement with Britain on the evacuation of the Suez base was "contrary to the national interests of Egypt and the Arab countries generally," and the workers are told that they will have to "fight many more battles [against their rulers] before genuine democracy prevails in their country." [19]

The post-war economic development schemes of the French Government, according to *Borba za Afriku*,[20] are "a blatant example of lying demagogy and swindling the people on the part of the French imperialists and their Socialist agents." On the other hand, the Neo-Destour party in Tunisia, and the

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 327.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 331.
[17] *Ibid.*, p. 349.
[18] *Imperialisticheskaya Borba za Afriku i Osvoboditelnse Dvizhenie Narodov*, Soviet Academy of Sciences, 1953, p. 126.
[19] *Narodi Afriki*, Soviet Academy of Sciences, 1954–55, p. 213.
[20] pp. 75–77.

Istiqlal in Morocco, are described by Soviet writers as " national reformists " who stand only for partial reforms, and only under popular pressure at that. " The practice of the national liberation movement bears witness to the inconsistency and instability of the big bourgeoisie, its tendency to betray the national interest for the sake of its class interests." [21] Moroccan nationalist resistance to France, as represented by the Istiqlal, is explained by the fact that " French imperialism hampers the economic development of the country and prevents the Moroccan bourgeoisie from enriching itself." [22] Bourguiba is criticised for his trip to the United States in 1951 [23] which facilitated American efforts to prevent the establishment of a unified national front in Tunisia. By contrast the Algerian nationalists escape more lightly, in view of their greater readiness to co-operate with the Communists.

Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie, a journal devoted to the study of Asian and African affairs, made its first appearance in April 1955. Since that date its aims have been repeatedly stated and restated, and, in view of the current spring-cleaning in the realm of historiography and allied domains, further modifications must be expected.

The editorial statement introducing the first issue was still orthodox in the elaborate contrast it drew between the Asian " people's democracies " and the rest, the former having taken their fate into their own hands, while the latter still lacked genuine independence. The journal, it was stated, would devote careful attention to the class struggle, and do its best to unmask reactionary ideologies harmful to the people's fight for social liberation and national independence.[24] Later issues showed a falling away from this aim, the term " class struggle " being carefully circumvented in writings dealing with India and other countries. While Asian and African leaders were criticised for displaying insufficient enthusiasm in the struggle against the West, none of them was " ideologically unmasked." Of late there

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 96.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 86.
[23] *Narodi Afriki*, p. 176.
[24] *S.V.*, No. I, p. 6.

has also been a slight toning-down of the anti-American drive, compared with earlier utterances laying stress upon the menace to Asian and African freedom and independence inherent in United States policies.

The editors have, of course, devoted a good deal of attention to the Middle East. A review of J. Hurewitz's *Middle East Dilemmas*,[25] notes the author's regrets that "America's expansion" should conflict with British interests, and his appeal to the USA either to leave the Middle East alone or "to play a far more imaginative, forceful, and determining role." This, to the reviewer, suggests that "Hurewitz calls upon the governing circles of the USA to dispense with ceremonies in carrying out their aggressive policy in the countries of the Near and Middle East." Professor Philip Hitti's standard work, *The Arabs : A Short History*, receives similar treatment: a reactionary, pro-imperialist work, its scholarly inadequacy is said to be eloquent of the decay of Western historiography. Hitti is particularly taken to task for his suggestion that the Arab countries have been deeply influenced by European and American thought, including the idea of nationalism. This tendentious presentation, according to the reviewer, is designed to show that the progressive political ideology of the national liberation movement is not a home-grown product. The author is also reproached for not describing the reactionary role of pan-Islamism and for "repeating the unfounded assertion that the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca expresses the unity of all Muslims, irrespective of national or social status."

Anti-Westernism in the Arab world never fails to come in for favourable mention. Discussing the "Growth of National Consciousness in the Arab Countries," Mrs. L. N. Vatolina[26] is impressed with the spread of anti-Western sentiment, even in such backward countries as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Jordan. Describing various features peculiar to the nationalist movement in the Arab world, she lays stress upon the fact that Communist

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 173.
[26] *S.V.*, No. V, p. 59.

activities are effectively promoted by way of " national fronts " and similar organisations.

> The process of creating a united national front does not occur everywhere in a uniform manner. It develops most successfully in those Arab countries where a solidly organised vanguard of the working class is already in existence, such as Syria and the Lebanon.[27]

The author notes that the " national bourgeoisie " has in recent years attempted to win the leadership of the national liberation movement, but its vacillations and its tendency to seek a compromise with imperialism inhibit it from pushing the fight to a conclusion. The national bourgeoisie, moreover, is not a strong force in these countries, and leadership in the national struggle can only go to the proletariat. Due attention is given in this connection to the success of various front organisations among " a considerable part of the Arab intelligentsia: journalists, writers, artists, lawyers, etc." Israel, which played a very important part in stimulating the growth of " national consciousness " among the Arabs, does not figure in this particular context.

Soviet Orientalists have now been editorially advised that they were wrong to condemn as reactionary certain measures adopted by the nationalist bourgeoisie which were in fact " objectively progressive." Kemalist " *étatism* " is mentioned in this context " because to some extent it defended the national interest of Turkey and strengthened her position in the struggle for economic independence." [28] Similarly, the USSR and China are said to be following with deep sympathy the efforts of the Asian peoples (*e.g.*, in India, Indonesia, Afghanistan) to develop their national economies. The economic aid lent to these countries by the USSR and China is described as disinterested, unlike that proffered by the Western Powers. It is the task of Soviet experts to show up the disingenuous efforts made by Western writers to provide theoretical proof of such false statements as that colonialism has been abandoned.

There is a general tendency for Soviet writers to believe that

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 65.
[28] *S.V.*, No. IV, p. 5.

popular pressure upon the "national bourgeoisie" in non-Communist Asia is more effective in the field of foreign affairs than in home politics, where its economic interests are directly concerned. This estimate colours two lengthy studies of Indian foreign and agrarian policies in the leading Soviet journal.

Writing in *Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie*, No. I, p. 36, A. M. Dyakov, an "old India hand," is full of praise for India's role in the "struggle for peace," notably the Indian Government's opposition to SEATO, its attitude during the Korean conflict, and its role in mediating in Vietnam. The attitude of Indian public opinion, it appears, has been conditioned by the intensive work of such bodies as the "Partisans of Peace," the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR and China, various trade unions, the association of progressive authors, and, last but not least, the Communist Party. They are stated to have turned India into one of the bastions of peace in Asia and the entire world, their influence being reflected in "the positive role of the Indian Government's foreign policy."

On the other hand, G. G. Kotovsky, writing on "Agrarian Relations in India," [29] finds no occasion for favourable comment. He believes that the Indian peasant is steadily sinking deeper into poverty, while economic inequality is on the increase in the villages, "kulaks" and landless labourers becoming more numerous. He divides the farm population into three groups: 5 to 10 per cent. kulaks, 20 per cent. medium-sized peasants, and about 70 per cent. poor peasants and landless labourers. There is no mention of the recent legislation directed against the larger landowners.

Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie does not as a rule deal with the internal problems of the Communist movement in non-Communist Asia. For obvious reasons it has hitherto likewise refrained from taking a stand where the national or economic interests of Asian or African countries have come into collision, *e.g.*, in the case of India and Pakistan, or Egypt and the Sudan.

The most recent phase in Soviet literature dealing with Asian problems is characterised by the publication of an unusually

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

large number of translations from Arabic, other Oriental languages, and the various tongues of the Indian sub-continent. Most of these writings are novels by Communists or fellow-travellers, but some of the classics have been included, as well as modern authors who are politically uncommitted; two of Nehru's books have been published. In each case the correct perspective is provided by a preface or epilogue composed by Soviet experts in Moscow. The editor of a collection of stories by "progressive" Arab writers, for example, notes [30] that the Republican régime introduced in Egypt "did not liquidate the rule of the imperialist monopolies and did not abolish semi-feudal relations."

Another sign of mounting interest is to be seen in the appearance of a large number of articles in Soviet weeklies and monthlies, most of them written by journalists, which deal in a friendly manner with conditions of life in the non-Communist countries of Africa and Asia, usually on the basis of first-hand impressions gathered during recent visits. An article in *Ogonek*,[31] for example, treats the Egyptian nationalist régime as an important stage in the evolution of an ancient country. India, Burma, Indonesia, and Afghanistan have lately benefited from similar attentions.

But friendly travelogues and translations of Oriental *belles-lettres* (frequently imbued with a spirit of social criticism) are one thing; political analysis is another. Soviet writers have hitherto shied away from the problem of making the new approach palatable to their readers at the ideological level. There are no book-length studies which express the "new spirit," while some of the theoretical writings which continue to be published show little inclination to adjust to the new exigencies of Soviet policy in Asia.

A typical example of this kind of writing is furnished by the first two volumes of the official *Recent History of the Countries of the East* covering the period from 1919 to 1939, and published by Moscow University between 1954 and 1956. This important textbook cannot be reviewed at length in this essay.

[30] *Raskazy Arabskikh Pisatelei*, 1955, p. 182.
[31] March 25, 1956.

For the present purpose it must suffice to note that the tone adopted towards the non-Communist nationalist movements in Asia is highly critical and on occasions downright hostile. This provoked a critical letter to the editor of the monthly *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn* from Professor A. Guber, Director of the Institute of Far Eastern Studies in the Academy of Sciences, drawing attention to various "basic shortcomings in the explanation of certain important events." [32] In particular, the authors are taken to task for having committed themselves to certain "erroneous formulations" concerning Gandhi—and this three years after the original scandal about the entry in the *Soviet Encyclopedia*! Guber complains that no reader of their account of Gandhi's career would ever come to understand why Gandhi is held in such high esteem in his own country. "They based themselves exclusively on Gandhi's philosophical views, which, as is known, differ widely from Marxism-Leninism, and in consequence displayed a one-sided attitude by ignoring altogether Gandhi's positive historical role." For Guber this is a matter of "erroneous formulations" rather than a question of basic approach. This probably represents the current official line. The Asian-African experts have thus been told—not for the first time—to mend their ways. To do so in a systematic manner they would have to rewrite the entire recent history of the Middle and Far East—not an impossible task, but clearly one that is going to tax their energies. So far there have been no signs that detailed studies reflecting the new approach are under way.

Mention having been made of Volume II of the new textbook of contemporary Asian history, which brings the story down to 1939, it is worth giving a few examples of the kind of thing that still passed early in 1956 for authoritative thinking on the subject of non-Communist movements.[33] On page 136 the authors note the resolution adopted by the Indian Congress in 1929 under the influence of Motilal Nehru, and solemnly state that it provoked angry protest demonstrations by "the workers." The "social reformists," *i.e.*, the Nehru-Bose wing of Congress, are

[32] March, 1956, p. 61.

[33] This volume, from which the following quotations are taken, was published in Moscow in January, 1956.

next blamed for attacking the Communists and "splitting the labour movement." [34]

The Congress leadership is condemned *en bloc* for consistently attempting to find common ground with the British.[35]

The civil disobedience resolution proposed by Nehru and adopted by Congress in 1930 was designed "to exploit the anti-imperialist mood of the masses for the purpose of exerting pressure on the British rulers, to obtain concessions in favour of the exploiting classes." [36]

Gandhi, who had been given dictatorial powers, acted solely in the interests of the exploiters—not surprisingly, since, according to the authors, he feared the revolutionary forces more than anything else in the world.[37]

The national reformists and the followers of M. N. Roy invariably defend the interests of the bourgeoisie, and damage those of the workers,[38] while Gandhi uses his influence to restrain the peasants from taking part in the anti-feudal struggle.[39]

Worst of all are the Congress Socialists: "Following the initiative, and under the political direction of the bourgeoisie, a Socialist party was founded in 1934, for the struggle against the Communists, and in order to suppress more effectively the workers and peasants." These "agents of the bourgeoisie," although they really had nothing in common with socialism, nonetheless by some means succeeded in deceiving various people with their "leftist demagogy." Unmasking the treacherous role of the Congress left-wingers and the Socialists remained "one of the basic tasks of the Indian Communists."

National movements elsewhere in Asia and the Middle East fare no better. Kemalist Turkey is characterised by "intensification of national persecution" and "deals between the exploiting classes and the imperialists." The Syrian nationalists in the thirties exploited the national struggle of the masses in order to wring some paltry concessions from the French.[40] It is the same

[34] p. 138.
[35] p. 139.
[36] p. 140.
[37] *Ibid.*
[38] p. 146.
[39] p. 150.
[40] p. 249.

story in Egypt, in Korea, and in Japan. The chief culprits invariably are the "national reformists," *i.e.*, the left wing of the local nationalist movement plus the Socialists. In Japan, for example, not merely the right-wing Socialist party of the period, but its left-wing rival as well, is accused of "social fascism." [41]

Amid this flood of abuse and denigration the treatment of Gandhi proved particularly inconvenient, coming as it did shortly after the Soviet visit to India last autumn. There has in consequence been something in the nature of partial disavowal of current texts on this subject, as already noted. Whether this incident heralds a general change of approach remains to be seen.

[41] p. 109.

26

ORIENTAL STUDIES *

THE adjustment of Soviet Oriental studies to the new directives issued by the XXth Congress has now got under way, albeit a little hesitantly. As noted before in these pages, Soviet writers dealing with Asian and African affairs have in the past been somewhat slow in grasping the implications of the post-Stalin trend. Attacks on nationalism, and on the various nationalist movements, continued more or less in the stereotyped form, while Soviet foreign policy was clearly moving in a different direction. That the process of adjustment was not easy can be gauged, *inter alia*, from the four months' delay in the scheduled appearance of the January, 1957, number of *Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie*, the principal journal devoted to Middle and Far Eastern questions. Now that the issue is in print it is seen to contain an editorial on the XXth Congress and its impact on the study of Eastern questions, as well as an article by the editor, Maslennikov, dealing substantially with the same theme. There is also, for the first time, a summary in English of the articles and reviews in this number—all except the editorial. Perhaps its contents were thought to be a trifle disturbing.

The editorial sets out by admitting that Soviet Orientalists have in the past been guilty of serious errors. They are said to have held, for example, that the Asian countries would not be able to develop their economies. They also took the mistaken view that the achievement of national independence after the Second World War was merely the final chapter in the calculated "conspiracy between the local (big) bourgeoisie and imperialism" to throw dust in the eyes of the toilers. They did not pay sufficient attention to the (economic) points of discord between the "national bourgeoisie" and foreign imperialist interests. On occasion they likewise tended to "idealise" the expansionist

* Chap. 26 first appeared in *Soviet Survey*, 1956, No. 8.

policy of Tsarism in Asia. They are now reminded that "at a certain stage of development the interests of the national bourgeoisie coincide with those of the majority of the people," though a rider is added to the effect that the retreat of the imperialist powers was not due to the diplomacy of Nehru, Soekarno, and Nasser but to popular pressure and in particular to the growing might of the USSR. The latter in particular made possible the peaceful attainment of national independence by these countries —a possibility which had been wrongly denied by Soviet writers in the past.

The position at the moment, still according to the editorial, is that the proletarian vanguard of the patriotic movement has not been able to establish its hegemony in countries such as India, Burma, Indonesia, or Egypt. This is to occur at a later stage, and is regarded as inevitable, since full political and economic freedom can be won only by the working class, *i.e.*, under Communist direction. Nonetheless it is now said to be a mistake to treat the present leaders of these countries as mere demagogues or opportunists. Notwithstanding their weaknesses, the programmes evolved by them for India, Indonesia, Burma, Egypt, etc., contain progressive features which Communists ought to support. A total rejection of the "national bourgeoisie" would necessarily constitute a "sectarian" approach and tend to isolate the Communist parties from the rest of the national movement in the present phase of the struggle against the West in Asia and Africa.

An illustration of the manner in which the new line is being applied comes to hand in the shape of a booklet by L. I. Klimovich on the subject of Islamic origins and prospects.[1] It is of special interest because the author is one of the few surviving Soviet Orientalists of the twenties, a veteran in the field of anti-Islamic propaganda, and the author of a standard work published in 1929 on *Socialist Construction in the East and Religion*, as well as about thirty other works mostly devoted to the refutation of Islamic claims. His latest offering is fairly restrained in tone, and harks back only faintly to earlier full-blooded denunciations of Islam as the "ideology of Mecca

[1] *Znanie*, Moscow, April, 1956.

financiers." Instead, much is made of the positive part played by numerous Moslems, including some of their religious leaders, in the anti-imperialist movement, *i.e.*, in anti-Western propaganda. " The change in the attitude of some representatives of the Moslem clergy reflects the great social changes that have taken place in many Islamic countries." At the same time the reader is warned not to mistake these phenomena for evidence of a change within Islam itself, an " unscientific and anti-materialist world view." [2] The " imperialist " Pan-Islamic agitation allegedly emanating from Turkey and Pakistan is denounced, while praise is given to the utterances of the Cairo daily *Al Ghoumhouriya* (whose editor happens to be in charge of the Egyptian bureau of the Pan-Islamic congress). There is also a rebuke for those Moslem theologians at the Cairo theological seminary of Al Azhar who are reputedly in favour of closer relations with, of all things, the Vatican. It may be noteworthy in this context that Soviet Islamic scholars have now appeared at Al Azhar in the guise of students of religion. Since it seems unlikely that Soviet citizens would be allowed abroad for the purpose of attending courses at Orthodox or Jewish seminaries, this would seem to suggest both a certain interest in Islam as a quasi-political factor, and a marked rise of confidence in the possibility of infiltrating even its theological strongholds.

At a somewhat lower level, fulsome flattery of the various Arab governments now in power (notably that in Egypt) is the order of the day. Mrs. L. Vatolina, the leading expert on Egyptian questions, who less than two years ago described Colonel Nasser and his friends as " madly reactionary " and their promised reforms as eyewash, has suddenly discovered that they are, after all, " progressive, peace loving," and even revolutionary in intention.[3] Similar flatteries are daily heaped upon Arab nationalists in general, and even upon Middle Eastern peoples still groaning under the feudal yoke as in Afghanistan. If their governments cannot be praised, it is at least possible to comment on the people's " love of freedom." [4] These tributes are

[2] p. 29.
[3] *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn*, 1956, No. 6.
[4] *Cf.* I. M. Reisner, *Our Neighbour Afghanistan*, May, 1956.

frequently extravagant in tone, thus responding to an Eastern fashion which has not been outmoded by the craving for national independence and modernity. In this respect at least the Soviet propagandists are proving remarkably apt at their job.

27

THE CRISIS OF STALINISM *

THESE final chapters were composed not long after the upheaval through which Poland and Hungary went towards the end of 1956, and it was therefore felt advisable to depart some distance from the policy, previously followed, of not commenting directly upon current affairs. Theory and practice are connected not only for Marxists. To understand what Communists have been saying and thinking about the recent upheaval in two of the satellite countries is in large measure to understand why the upheaval has taken place. Moreover, there is every sign that it is having important repercussions on Soviet political thinking—which after all is among the central concerns of our *Survey*.

The purpose of this analysis therefore is not seriously endangered by harking back for a moment to one of Stalin's utterances on the subject of intervention in other people's affairs. The occasion, it is true, was offered by the "Popular Front" tactics of 1936, when it was in the interest of the Soviet Government to make outsiders believe that forcible intervention beyond the frontiers of the USSR was not in accordance with Communist principles. But many people felt at the time that the statement which Stalin gave to the well-known American newspaper publisher, Mr. Roy Howard, on the subject of non-intervention was sufficiently general in its wording to have a programmatic character. For it was on this occasion that Stalin declared:

> If you think that the people of the Soviet Union have any desire to alter the face of the surrounding States—and moreover to do so by force—then you are badly mistaken. I fail to see what danger the countries surrounding us can see in the ideas of the Soviet people, if these States are really firmly established.

And to Mr. Howard's observation, "You appreciate, no doubt, Mr. Stalin, that a large part of the world has long entertained a

* Chaps. 27–30 were first published in *Soviet Survey*, 1957, No. 11.

different impression," Stalin replied: "This is a product of misunderstanding." *Howard*: "A tragic misunderstanding?" *Stalin*: "No, a comic, or perhaps tragi-comic."

This then was the official doctrine during the pre-war period. and although from 1944 onward it was in effect superseded by the practice of imposing Communist minority governments by Soviet armed might, no attempt was made to work out a new ideological rationale. In official parlance, the post-war régimes in Eastern Europe were "people's governments" which had issued from the anti-German and anti-Fascist resistance movements. Their "popular" character was declared to be the concomitant of their successful emancipation from the influence of such nefarious elements as landowners, capitalists, militarists, and Fascists; and if they were destitute of the usual democratic sanction of free elections, they were at least said to act in accordance with the wishes of the "toilers." Moreover, it was arguable that in some at least of the countries in question there had been sizable Communist minority movements during the pre-war period.

Such excuses are now no longer viable. They had already been undermined by the Poznan riots, but since in Poland the Communist party, under a reformed leadership, retained control, it was still possible to claim that democratisation was compatible with Communist rule—although the institutional forms of a Communist-controlled one-party régime, which yet was not to be Stalinist, remained for the moment obscure. The shattering impact of the Hungarian catastrophe arises from the fact that here the "national-Communist" phase was by-passed by a genuine popular revolt, the force of the explosion being felt precisely by the self-appointed spokesmen of the "toiling masses." This has momentous consequences for Soviet ideologists, no less than for Soviet policy-makers. It is far easier for Communists—especially Russian Communists, with their populist contempt for parliamentary institutions inbred by two generations of political thinking preceding the 1917 collapse—to justify "temporary" dictatorship, and even the one-party State, than to find excuses for the brutal suppression of popular rebellion. The Hungarian debacle is particularly awkward

because Soviet military intervention in this area inevitably recalls the Tsarist "restoration of order" in 1849, which Lenin subsequently used as a textbook example of what Tsarism meant in practice, both for its own subjects and for neighbouring countries. Since the Communists are unable to deny that naked force was employed wholesale to overthrow the short-lived revolutionary régime in Budapest, it becomes doubly important for them to discover some political criterion by which to justify such action. The official explanation that force was needed to assist the Hungarian working-class in its struggle against "armed reactionaries" has such a hollow ring in the light of recent events that only the most hardened Stalinists can think of employing it. Yet no other explanation can be given, since to admit the truth that the revolt was led by workers and students —some of them undoubtedly Communists, or at least Socialists —would be to concede that the régime had in fact no popular basis at all.

It would be purposeless to go into the reasons for the different development of the Polish crisis which came to a head in the second half of October. But since the bulk of this *Survey* is concerned with Poland—the Hungarian catastrophe is still too recent to permit anything like dispassionate analysis of its causes —it may be appropriate to recall the close connection between Poland and Hungary in previous phases of European history. The Budapest demonstrators who laid down flags at the statue of General Bem—the Polish leader who in 1848–49 commanded part of the Hungarian revolutionary army under Kossuth—showed by their gesture that they were aware of their country's political traditions. Poland and Hungary, with Italy, took the lead in 1848–49, while Bohemia—the kernel of the present Czechoslovakia—remained quiet or supported the Habsburgs. It has often been argued that the "gentry nations" found it easier to revolt because their native nobility had not been crushed or displaced by a pliable middle-class. By the same token, gentry leadership proved a handicap in the Polish insurrection of 1863, following which, indeed, the Polish bourgeoisie decided to dispense for a while with national pretensions and to make its peace with the Tsarist Government. "Bourgeois nationalism"

in Poland goes back to the 1890s, to be superseded before long by the radical nationalism of the PPS, the major socialist party in pre-1914 Russian Poland, and the training school of Joseph Pilsudski, who became Poland's national leader during the inter-war period. The relationship between the anti-Russian nationalism of Pilsudski and his friends, and the anti-German nationalism of Roman Dmovski's strongly Catholic and conservative National Democrats, makes up a large part of Poland's internal history between the wars. With Germany no longer in the field—except as a possible threat to the Oder-Neisse line—it was no doubt to be expected that post-1945 Poland should revert to the habit of seeking greater freedom from Russia.

There was here perhaps a dialectical tension between Poland's evident need for Soviet support against German revisionism, and her traditional dislike of Russian control. By contrast, Hungary was kept in the Soviet orbit solely by the fact that her Communist Government required armed Russian support to hold down its own people. This fact has now become evident, but it governed the situation even before the outbreak in late October. Left to itself, Hungary would automatically have gravitated in the direction of Austria, *i.e.*, towards neutrality. But in so doing she might have pulled Poland part of the way with her. It was presumably this consideration which dictated the Russian intervention.

In the light of what we now know, the intellectual ferment in Hungary during the summer and early autumn takes on a new and tragic significance, for one cannot doubt that its promoters must have contributed many of their number to the long list of victims. The ferment was certainly as pronounced as in Poland, and quite unlike the muttered resentments in East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Bulgaria, where de-Stalinisation was making such slow progress as to be almost invisible. While in these last-named countries the intelligentsia contented itself with wringing small crumbs of comfort from the Party leaders without overstepping the ideological boundary lines, Hungary witnessed the unusual spectacle of a political upheaval being spearheaded in the domain of the spirit. Here, too, the Polish parallel is significant: the 700 Polish intellectuals

whom the Stalinist diehards reputedly intended to place under arrest in the event of a successful coup against the Gomulka group, had their counterparts in the " Petoefi circles " in Budapest and elsewhere. But whereas in Poland the movement retained its connection with the dissident faction among the Communist leadership, in Hungary it eventually went beyond it, in the direction of democracy as understood in the West: for a brief and tragic moment the Hungarian intellectuals were really free to say what they thought.

During the summer of 1956 it began to become evident that the political and intellectual ferment in the satellite countries was having a disturbing effect on the Soviet Government. From Moscow's point of view, the movement was getting out of control. In trying to counteract what they clearly regarded as harbingers of trouble, the ideological spokesmen of Soviet Communism—in operational terms, the Agitprop Department of the Central Committee—normally adopted a brusque and hectoring tone, but now and then they went so far as to argue with their heretics. Even on these occasions, however, their efforts were limited to trying to explain the true meaning of Leninism to the backward members of the class. No attempt was made to meet the critics on their own ground. When *Pravda* and *Kommunist* did not denounce them as hostile elements, they contented themselves with dismissing them as " politically immature and gullible people who have been taken in by the nonsense about 'national Communism.' " [1] It was scarcely a coincidence that *Kommunist* [2] at about the same time sounded the political tocsin in the approved Stalinist manner, by proclaiming that the decisions of the XXth Party Congress had " provoked unrest and bitterness [*sic*] in the camp of the enemies of socialism." The enemy, it appeared, was reacting by trying to sow dissension between the USSR and its neighbours, and specifically between the Soviet Communist Party and other Communist movements. Western agencies, in co-operation with " capitalist remnants " in the " people's democracies," and abetted by " politically immature " people, were stirring up

[1] *Pravda*, July 16, 1956.
[2] 1956, No. 11.

chauvinist sentiments against the USSR. "The crafty enemy would like to isolate the various socialist countries, in order to liquidate them one by one." The proper response was to reaffirm the monolithic character of the international Communist movement, for the various Communist parties could achieve their national aims only on the basis of "proletarian internationalism," *i.e.*, under Moscow's control. The "leading role" of the USSR was thus once more affirmed in tones reminiscent of the Stalin era.

It was during this uneasy interregnum between the XXth Congress and the Polish upheaval in late October that Bulganin, on the occasion of a brief visit to Warsaw, spoke out against the rebels in the Communist ranks who were filling the columns of the Polish press with criticisms of the régime: "Misled by the propaganda of our enemies, these people . . . at times indulge in mistaken interpretations of certain theses connected with the personality cult, and this has been reflected in the pages of some press organs in socialist countries, including Poland. Cases have occurred of elements hostile to our cause making use of the press of socialist countries in order to sow their poisonous seeds. Some directors of these press organs have surrendered to hostile influences, have forgotten that the Party press should above all be a loyal and consistent champion of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, and a militant propagandist in the struggle for the building of socialism. . . . We cannot overlook the attempts to weaken the international ties of the socialist camp in the guise of conforming to so-called 'national features,' attempts to undermine the authority of the people's democratic state in the guise of a so-called 'extension of democracy.'"[3] This harsh rebuke was politely but firmly rebutted by the Polish Communist organs in question. Although it had little effect on the liberalisation drive in Poland, it can be seen now to have indicated a stiffening in the Kremlin.

During August and September, with the tide of self-criticsm running high in the satellites, the Soviet press took little note of these heart-searchings; but *Literaturnaya Gazeta* did on two or three occasions have something to say about the intellectual

[3] *Pravda*, July 22, 1956.

malaise in Poland and the self-criticisms voiced at writers' meetings in Warsaw, Prague, and Bucharest. The only substantial attempt to come to grips with the critics was made by a writer in the September, 1956, issue of *Inostrannaya Literatura* [4] who dealt laboriously with the shocking suggestion made by some Polish writers that Soviet literature during the past twenty-five years (*i.e.*, the Stalin era) had produced nothing worth mention. This was countered by a reminder that, although the "cult of personality" had indeed interfered with the growth of Soviet literature, it had not prevented the publication of noteworthy writings. "It would be incorrect to turn any and every of A. A. Zhdanov's statements on art and literature into a dogma, but we recall with full sympathy his words at the conference of Soviet writers, when he said that Soviet literature had become the most progressive . . . in the world." The writer then proceeded to a lengthy and exceedingly tiresome and hackneyed defence of "Socialist Realism." But his chief difference with the Polish writers centred on the role of the Party in literature. Here Lenin's well-known dicta were recalled, in order to disprove the contention that the Party's "leading role" applied only to the sphere of political propaganda. On the contrary, the whole of culture must reflect the Party spirit. "Writers who dispute the right of the Party to influence the development of literature, do not understand the tremendous educational significance of the arts, or worse, they do not understand the role of the Communist Party."

The ferment in the East European countries, with Poland then well in the lead, was thus reported to the Soviet public only in the familiar form of a scholastic dispute over Leninism. The subsequent spate of political comment in the Soviet press on the Polish and Hungarian events of October and November belongs to the realm of political warfare. That the Hungarian uprising should be reported in terms of a struggle between the working-class and "counter-revolutionaries," armed and organised by the Western Powers, need not occasion surprise. What is more remarkable is the treatment originally given to the movement in Poland which throughout remained under

[4] A. Dementyov, "Errors or Prejudice?"

Communist control. Here *Pravda* went so far (October 20) in denouncing what it called "the anti-socialist campaign in the pages of several Polish newspapers" that it was subsequently obliged to reprint an editorial rebuke in the chief Polish Communist newspaper. But that was after Khrushchev and his colleagues had decided to come to terms with the Gomulka Government. (The particular culprit singled out for abuse by *Pravda*, one Florczak, had some months earlier attracted attention by demanding for Poland equal status with the USSR. It is a reasonable assumption that this unheard-of pretension, rather than his subsequent deviations from Leninism, caused *Pravda's* correspondent in Warsaw to treat him as a dangerous counter-revolutionary.)

The bewildering speed with which events subsequently unrolled in Budapest was reflected in *Pravda's* assurance to its readers [5] that the Nagy Government (which Soviet troops and tanks were to overthrow five days later) had won the support of the Hungarian workers. The fact that Nagy had asked for the withdrawal of Soviet troops was tactfully omitted. On the same day, a well-known Soviet writer, Georgi Gulya, admitted in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* that "much perplexity" had accumulated in Hungary during the Rakosi régime, and suggested that the rebellion had been essentially democratic. He had a special word of praise for the Budapest writers and intellectuals who, although misguided in some of their demands, had not on the whole set themselves in opposition to the "people's democracy" as such. This cautious appraisal suggests perhaps that some Soviet writers may have hoped for a "Polish" solution. In the event, these hopes were doomed to disappointment.

In early November the Middle East briefly held pride of place in Soviet news comments. Although Soviet intervention against the Nagy Government took effect on November 4, several days passed before the full significance of what was happening in Hungary burst upon the Soviet reading public in the form of inspired reports and comments on the "crushing" of the Hungarian "counter-revolution." The readers of *Pravda* and other journals then learned that Soviet forces had moved

[5] October 30, 1956.

in, at the request of the Hungarian Government, in order to deal with "Fascist bands" who were engaged in killing honest patriots and terrorising the vast majority of the Hungarian people. This theme was embellished with pictorial representations of "patriots" killed or tortured by "Fascists," and reports from "eye-witnesses." The latter's identity was at first cleverly concealed by allowing a "Bulgarian journalist" (unnamed) to quote from the Hamburg newspaper *Die Welt am Sonntag*.[6] Subsequent eye-witness reports were credited to Czech journalists, and even to the leader [*sic*] of a group of Soviet tourists. The public was also frequently informed that "American (or British, or French) journalists have admitted that honest Hungarian patriots did not participate in the bloody crimes of the reactionaries,"[7] while a Soviet musician[8] delivered himself of the somewhat improbable statement that the rebels (presumably including the veteran composer Kodaly) were "destroyers of culture."

The anti-intellectual note proper to the current revival of Stalinist themes was struck by B. Leontiev in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*.[9] After voicing indignation at the failure of Western journalists to report the enthusiastic reception of the Soviet troops in dozens of Hungarian townships and villages, he went on to note "with regret" the characteristic inability of so many intellectuals to stand fast at a time of crisis. "No one any longer believes in the aggressive intentions of the USSR, and in this respect the imperialist camp has got into an awkward position. But some gullible people have been taken in by this propaganda (*i.e.*, relating to Hungary). This has happened before. In 1917 there were intellectuals who called themselves socialists, but who hastened to dissociate themselves from socialism, so that they should not be charged—heaven forbid—with responsibility for the 'Bolshevik horrors' invented by the press." Similar tendencies were noted after the 1948 *coup* in Prague, when some Western intellectuals refused to follow the Soviet lead. Fortunately, "the builders of the new society are

[6] *Cf. Komsomolskaya Pravda*, November 11, 1956.
[7] *Pravda*, November 10, 1956.
[8] Berman, *Sovetskaya Kultura*, November 13, 1956.
[9] November 13, 1956.

not going to let themselves be deflected" by hysterical and over-sensitive intellectuals. "The socialist camp advances in seven-league boots. Very soon even our feeble, hesitant, and inconsistent colleagues in the West will understand that there is no room for disputes as to which system is preferable." The Soviet Union and its satellites alone stand "for friendship between the nations and spiritual freedom."

28

SPOTLIGHT ON POLAND

By L. Labedz

THERE have been few such fundamentalist statements of doctrine in modern times as Gomulka's declaration, on taking office in Warsaw at the height of the recent crisis, that "the only unalterable principle of socialism is the abolition of the exploitation of man by man." This programmatic statement was uttered by the new leader at a moment when the political turmoil in Poland had reached a climax, but it summed up an intellectual development within Polish Marxism which had already been in progress for more than a year, and which is clearly destined to have some long-range effect on the spiritual centre of Communism itself, no matter how many political setbacks the movement of emancipation from Moscow may have to undergo.

When doctrinal doubts begin to arise, Communist intellectuals frequently tend to revise more than the political framework of their system of beliefs. This tendency has been evident in the case of Poland, a country with an ancient and powerful European culture-consciousness, reinforced by national resentment and politico-economic revulsion against the established system which also embodied the established doctrine. For many of the younger intellectuals already educated in the Party spirit, the outcome is likely to be a crisis of faith. Even if one abstracts from such cases, it is already apparent that the new phenomenon we are dealing with cannot be adequately described as "Polish Titoism." The Titoist doctrine was a *post hoc* rationalisation on the part of the excommunicated leaders, an ideology made to measure and constantly refashioned to suit a changing political situation. In Poland by contrast, the "revisionists" tried to bring about a change and have in many instances gone

further than the ex-Titoist heretic, Djilas, though they have so far refrained from publicly expressing doubts about the monopolistic position of the Party in the political sphere.

The movement started as a protest against the strangulation of cultural activities, and more generally against excessive interference by the Party in non-political fields. Along with this there went the fundamentalist critique of " mistaken interpretations " of revealed truth which frequently accompanies a revolt against orthodoxy, and the corresponding call for a " return " to the essentials of the true faith. Such elements were noticeable in the flood of criticism which erupted, but the more sophisticated spokesmen of the Communist intelligentsia did not rest content with simple fundamentalism. It was not long before the ghosts of Bernstein and Rosa Luxemburg, of Bukharin and Trotsky, stalked the scene. More than once were these historic figures mentioned by name, although to the younger generation their writings may be little known. But their attitudes inspired some of the more striking formulations put forward by the critics. Titoist tendencies proper—both syndicalist and Austro-Marxist in provenance—were likewise manifest, while certain statements fell into neither of these categories and came perilously close to disbelief in the essentials of doctrine.

Although this revisionist current was invariably qualified by references to Marx, and presented as a " return to Leninism," in terms appropriate since the XXth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, it soon overflowed the banks. The chief political weapon used in the struggle was not the clumsy ideological jugglery of Khrushchev's opening address to the Congress, but his " secret " report on Stalin.

At the ideological level confusion reigned, with reformist and revolutionary attitudes simultaneously professed by the critics of orthodoxy, who in some cases seem not to have realised that they were putting forward incompatible ideas. Other writers seem to have been in doubt—official assurances notwithstanding—whether Marxism was still relevant to all the topics under discussion. While their proclaimed aim was to bring it

up to date, they appeared in fact more interested in getting it out of the way.

Some of the old taboos which still remained in force had an obviously hampering effect on the discussions, as did the prolonged isolation from the West. Yet the political significance of the whole debate on fundamentals is apparent now. Ideology can serve as a cover for political aims—consciously or otherwise. The line between "false consciousness" and false pretences or between honest doubt and deliberate camouflage is not in all cases easy to draw. But in the case of the more youthful participants at least there seems to have been a genuine outburst of long-suppressed feelings and thoughts; what was a matter of cynical readjustment for aged careerists was plainly an overflow of conscience for many of the young. It is not without significance that a recent conference of the student *aktiv* resolved on the constitution of a "revolutionary union of youth, of a definitely Marxist character," an organisation which should either be independent of the Polish version of the Komsomol or form a revolutionary current within it.[1]

It was mainly the young who tended to fall back on fundamentalism, stressing the revolutionary aspects of Leninism, reviving memories of the Spanish civil war,[2] and appealing for a "pure" form of proletarian dictatorship, *i.e.*, one free from bureaucratic domination. Yet though there was much talk of standing for the interests of the workers against the bureaucracy, the debate was essentially over culture. In the Soviet Union the pre-revolutionary Westernised intelligentsia has largely been liquidated. In Poland, where it was even more profoundly Westernised, it survived the relatively brief period of Communist rule, and promptly took the opportunity offered to it by the de-Stalinisation campaign. The historical roots of Polish individualism are anyhow in sharp contrast to the traditions of Russian autocracy. It was inevitable that the relaxation of

[1] *Trybuna Ludu*, October 29, 1956.

[2] One of its survivors, recalling the Stalinist liquidation of rivals in Republican Spain, raised the question whether the 1937 "putsch" in Barcelona "was needed by the organisers of the Moscow trials" (J. Wyka, "Spanish and Polish Affairs," *Poprostu*, October 21, 1956).

thought-control should result in an invasion of the carefully guarded doctrinal sphere.

The first writer to put forward a boldly revisionist thesis was the distinguished sociologist J. Chalasinski. Writing in the columns of *Nauka Polska*, he advanced the daring thesis that a supporter of historical materialism is not necessarily bound to accept uncritically every assertion made by the founders of Marxism. He also suggested that values cannot be deduced either from the physical sciences or from Marxism. Although rebuked by the *Literary Journal*, he went on to criticise the part played by Marxist orthodoxy in the humanities during the past decade. Deploring its fruits, he pointed to the prevalence of an enforced unanimity, an impersonal style, moral emptiness combined with megalomania, and a general absence of real achievements. According to another writer " at present, under socialism, we have retrogressed in the domain of scientific inquiry on social problems even in comparison with the inter-war period." [3] The fault lay in the monopoly accorded to Marxism-Leninism, the absence of freedom, and the consequent lack of genuine discussion.[4]

This scarcely veiled assault on the Party's monopoly in the intellectual field set the ball of criticism rolling. Chalasinski's attack on " partiinost " in science gave the signal for similar utterances in the literary field and in other intellectual domains. Hitherto repressed critical attitudes began to find their way to the surface and were voiced with growing intensity. Among the more striking was an article by another sociologist, St. Ossovski, on the development of individual creativity [5] which the orthodox can hardly have relished.

From attacks on Stalinist practice, the movement of criticism spread to Marxist theory. The Party's monopoly of intellectual control was now questioned in the light of its sorry achievements in the cultural field, and this led to the question how far Marxism could be held responsible for what even the orthodox had to admit was an unsatisfactory state of affairs. This in

[3] *Przeglad Zagadnien Socjalnych*, July, 1956.
[4] J. Chalasinski, " Problems of Contemporary Culture in Polish Humanities," *Nauka Polska*, 1955, No. 2.
[5] *Przeglad Kulturalny*, 1956, No. 13.

turn raised the problem of what, in technical terms, should perhaps be called the Engels-Plekhanov version of Marxist epistemology, and from there the critics advanced, albeit with due caution, to the premises of Marxist theory as such. The debate thus imperceptibly involved the fundamentals of doctrine, and even the official propagandists were compelled to retreat from previously maintained positions. One of the most important among them, the Party philosopher A. Schaff, began by defending the "unambiguousness of Marxian ideology," the class character of the criteria of truth, the class conditioning of cultural phenomena, and the consequent need for "full domination of Marxism" through Party control of the physical and social sciences; at the same time he urged scientists to seek the truth, without troubling to explain how this was to be done if the two desiderata should come into conflict. Yet he conceded some points to his opponents, and even delivered an attack on the "cult of the individual" and its harmful consequences three months before Khrushchev's report to the XXth Congress, thus causing a minor sensation. Having thus replaced the infallible leader by the infallible party, he later (after the XXth Congress) went so far as to state that no institution could be considered infallible.[6]

There were other attempts to halt the revisionist wave, Zolkievski, the Minister of Culture (since replaced), while conceding some of the critics' charges, reminded them that the abolition of the "cult of the individual" did not imply a retreat from Marxism-Leninism, or the abandonment by the Party of its controlling position in the arts and sciences.[7] These heretical demands were likewise censured in the theoretical organ of the Party by H. Eilstein, who insisted that "the fight against dogmatism cannot become a fight for the acceptance . . . of revisionism and eclectic compromises on the fundamental questions."[8]

These attempts to throw up a dyke against the "thaw" suffered a drastic blow when the Khrushchev report on Stalin

[6] *Nowe Drogi*, 1956, No. 4.
[7] *Ibid.*, 1955, No. 12.
[8] *Ibid.*, 1956, No. 2.

reached Poland. Whereas in the USSR its full text was not very widely divulged, in Poland it was circulated in printed form to every Party cell in the country by the Central Committee itself—apparently in order to forestall its disclosure by Western broadcasts, which are widely listened to. The effect was shattering. It now became impossible to limit the scope of criticism to the official framework. Captive minds began to sprout heretical thoughts, using the prescribed jargon in the interest of genuine criticism. Dubious or risky pronouncements were boldly put forward in the guise of attempts to carry out the decisions of the XXth Congress. The movement snowballed into a general assault on orthodoxy, far beyond the previous borders of licensed criticism. Here and there attempts were made to condemn the "hysterical petty-bourgeois elements," but they proved unavailing. By imperceptible gradations, some of the hitherto terrorised "engineers of the soul" recovered some of their liberty to think, and even admitted that they had previously been outraging their own consciences.

The lead was taken by the student youth, whose weekly journal, *Poprostu*, had transformed itself in September, 1955, into the organ of the critical elements among the intelligentsia. Its courageous stand soon won it enormous popularity, its circulation reaching the astonishing figure of one hundred and fifty thousand copies, which were sold within an hour of publication. At the same time, debating clubs—the equivalents of the Petöfi and Kossuth circles in Hungary—sprang up and rapidly became a vehicle for the voicing of public complaints.

This intellectual ferment had a notable effect on the still continuing academic debate between orthodox defenders of the faith and their revisionist critics. On behalf of the former, A. Schaff fell back on a new line of defence. He was now found ready to condemn "authoritarian solutions of scientific problems, on the basis of one's position in the hierarchy," [9] although he hedged by insisting that nothing should be done to "undermine the domination of Marxist methodology in science." But this was mere face-saving. The revisionists were emerging as the victors in the debate which now entered

[9] *Nowe Drogi*, 1956, No. 6.

upon a fresh phase. Even before the political split within the Central Committee became notorious, the critical elements among the intelligentsia had become the spearhead of opposition against what came to be known as the "Natolin group," *i.e.*, the diehard Stalinists.

The new ritual was not spared. The bolder critics now referred to "the so-called cult of the individual," *i.e.*, they went beyond the terms licensed by the XXth Congress. *Poprostu* openly pointed to the new distinguishing mark: "The writers are divided into those who discuss errors and distortions, and those who discuss so-called errors and distortions. The latter now make more frequent use of the term 'Stalinism.'" [10]

Circumlocutions were sometimes abandoned, notably by the younger writers, who often began to call a spade a spade, in doctrinal as well as political matters. Embarrassing questions were asked.[11] Surprise was expressed that Marxism is described "as a flourishing and universal theory" despite the fact "that for many years (it) has turned somersaults in one and the same place; that Marxist sociology has nothing to say on the most crucial problems; that Marxist ethics has remained until today where Marx left off and Marxist aesthetics does not exist at all . . ." [12] Even the Marxist notion of historical progress towards socialism did not escape derision. Its teleological assumptions were questioned. "History has to be tortured in order that it should give birth to the next formation as quickly as possible . . . [But] is it really worth while paying any price to history so that it should run quicker?" The answer is emphatically negative. "We demand responsibility to the present, and not to history." These formulations by one of the critics [13] give rise to the awkward question: "What is it that constitutes the superiority of one road to socialism over another? The fact that it is more rapid? No, the fact that it is socially

[10] *Poprostu*, October 21, 1956. R. Zimand: "The Controversy on The Future of Socialism."

[11] *Cf. Poprostu*, June 24, 1956. W. Godek and R. Turski: "Is this the decline of Marxism?"

[12] J. Szacki, "Some remarks on the history of Marxism," *Poprostu*, October 21, 1956.

[13] J. Kott, *Przeglad Kulturalny*, September 13–19, 1956.

cheaper." [14] And thus the twin pillars of Stalinism, political terror and forcible accumulation of capital, fall under critical, if indirect, scrutiny: "It is high time to apply Marxism to ourselves and inquire what are the real social costs of laying the foundations of socialism in the technically and economically undeveloped countries; we should inquire into the cost of our history . . . but the real cost and the real price: the economic price, the social price, the moral price."

Theoretical acrobatics are sharply condemned: "It would be only a slight exaggeration to say that we have done everything to stand Marxism on its head. It is not surprising that one day we woke up to find ourselves Hegelians once more. . . . History was turned into an account of congresses, resolutions, deviations, and fresh resolutions to correct such deviations. . . . But history cannot make mistakes, and in consequence every new stage requires a new interpretation of all the preceding phases. At best only the interpretation changes, and not the facts as well . . . history is written backwards, from the end to the beginning, often a very distant beginning." [15]

The "adventures of the dialectic" are likewise castigated. "In reality, the political function of the doctrine of non-antagonistic contradictions (which, logically, are and are not contradictions at the same time) consisted in throwing a mystical veil over the real contradictions. . . . This doctrine leads to the metaphysical thesis that under the régime in which socialism is being constructed . . . the struggle for power does not exist, the privileged stratum does not manifest a tendency towards stabilisation, and ideological incentives can permanently take the place of material ones."

Marxist economics come under fire. "Can one go on talking even about the relative pauperisation (of the working class) in Britain and the USA? What are the limits of economic planning under contemporary capitalism? Is it possible to maintain the thesis on its structural crisis? [16]

[14] *Ibid.*
[15] *Ibid.*
[16] *Ibid.*

Another author,[17] after a visit to Western Europe, discusses its "striking prosperity," a remark inconceivable not long ago. He does not attribute this prosperity to rearmament, an argument he no longer takes seriously. Rather, "it is the outcome of Keynesian doctrines which are underestimated and not properly studied (in Poland)." He concludes by suggesting that "the thesis concerning the absolute impoverishment of the working-class can be sustained only by statistical jugglery . . . for the well-paid categories of workers in many countries comprise not an insignificant section of the working-class but a considerable part of it."

Such admissions or discoveries give rise to second thoughts on old slogans. Thus Z. Florczak[18] raises the awkward question: "What is the present meaning of the vague slogan 'proletarian of all lands'?," and adds, "It is more than doubtful if (the Australian proletarians) want to unite with the proletarians of Poland. In Australia the minimum wage is so high that it even affects the workers' willingness to raise their standard of living. . . . . At the same time, revolts like the one in Poznan take place in Poland in order to improve elementary living conditions." This passage was not lost on the Moscow *Pravda* of October 20, 1956 ("Anti-Socialist Pronouncements in the Polish Press"), which attacked "Mr. Florczak" for trampling underfoot the sacred banner of proletarian internationalism.

Other writers are no less outspoken on this and related topics. One of them confronts the officially inspired enthusiasm with the drab facts of economic life, and remarks with bitter irony: "Our economic position is good, but not hopeless."[19] One of the causes of this state of affairs is that "the system of incentives is perhaps the most imperfect that could have been devised."[20] Another writer affirms that "the chief obstacles to the development of the productive forces are the relations of production," by which he means "the socio-

[17] *Poprostu*, October 7, 1956, St. Brodski: "Reflections on a Journey."
[18] *Nowa Kultura*, October 7, 1956, "Conversation with the West."
[19] B. Wojnar in *Poprostu*, October 7, 1956.
[20] St. Brodski, *ibid.*

political system called Stalinism." [21] Two other writers go even further and define it as " a socio-economic system . . . in which there is a relationship of economic dependency of the popular masses on the group of administrators. The political expression of this is the dictatorship of the ruling group *over* the proletariat." [22] Correctives are sought in the introduction of workers' control, the transformation of State property into social ownership, reinvigoration of market relations, profit-sharing schemes, and the improvement of cost-accounting.

The advocacy of Titoist practices is buttressed by Titoist arguments: " Stalinism, being one of the most radical revisions of Marxism, found its particular expression in its treatment of the role of the State and its functions. . . . For Stalin, the dispossession of the capitalists was not the last but the first act of the State. . . . There is no dictatorship of the proletariat as long as the worker is the hired employee of a State enterprise, and not its master." [23]

While these syndicalist notions were taken up in response to the aspirations of the workers, a young philosopher, L. Kolakowski, in an outspoken essay,[24] stressed the role of the intellectuals in the working-class movement. This, the first revisionist manifesto to appear in the Party's official organ, was at the same time the most comprehensive of any yet published.

Kolakowski starts from the assumption that the importance of the intellectuals for Communism should be particularly obvious because of " the impasse in which Marxist theory finds itself at present." He questions its validity in relation to four traditional themes: (1) There is no absolute pauperisation of the working-class under capitalism. (2) Its crisis theory is inapplicable to contemporary capitalism. (3) The doctrine of socialist revolution stands in need of revision. (4) The doctrine of the Party and its role in the State is incorrect.

[21] R. Zimand, *ibid.*, October 21, 1956.

[22] S. Cheltowski and W. Godek, " The first patrol," *Poprostu*, October 28, 1956.

[23] *Poprostu*, September 30, 1956, Y. Kossak, R. Turski and W. Wirpsza, " Workers' Control."

[24] *Nowe Drogi*, September, 1956, pp. 22–53: " Intellectuals and the Communist Movement."

Intellectual rigidity is held responsible for the growth of a dogmatic and quasi-religious attitude in Communist circles, culminating in worship of the infallible leader. "Every petrifaction of doctrine necessarily leads to its transformation into a mythology, surrounded by a ritual cult, turned into an object of devotion, and safeguarded from criticism. . . . In this situation embarrassing platitudes are proclaimed as theoretical achievements. It seems preposterous to have to explain that not all inventions are to be attributed to one particular nation. . . . Truisms known for centuries are presented as creative achievements of scientific progress. It is profoundly humiliating to have to be told that one should not falsify historical documents, that scientific opinions must be based on evidence, that criticism of scientific opponents should be to the point, etc."

"It is harmful," he proceeds, "to limit the scope of scientific inquiries; to proclaim any truths within the scope of scientific inquiry 'politically correct'; to impose upon scientific circles a direction of inquiry; to lay down truths that are taboo and excluded from discussion." Replying to Kolakowski in the same number of *Nowe Drogi*, R. Werfel, in "The Place of the Communist Intellectual is Within the Framework of the Party," employs the familiar arguments concerning the class character of ideology, and accuses his opponent of "setting the intellectual Communist centres against the Party of the working-class. . . . If the intellectual Communist milieux want to remain Communist, they should uphold not the slogan of freedom of scientific inquiry *from* the Party but rather the slogan of freedom of scientific inquiry *within* the Leninist Party. . . . What is to happen to the Party if one Communist tells the masses one thing, and another something else? We shall then have two or more parties, instead of one Party acting as the vanguard of the working-class. . . . To deny the necessity of such unity of action (and propaganda is also a form of action) signifies *the end of the Party*."

This, in broad outline, was the tenor of discussion on the eve of the eighth plenum of the Central Committee which saw Gomulka's return to power. One side attempted to reduce the

discussion to the problem of power, while the other protested bitterly that "after many years of proclaiming that we live under the most democratic régime possible, we have to invent a new term: democratisation." [25]

Soon after the triumph of Gomulka, the Central Committee of the United Workers' Party, in a melancholy letter to "our Hungarian brothers," declared: "You and we have undertaken a struggle for socialist democratisation in our countries, for equality and sovereignty in relations between socialist countries." [26]

When Soviet tanks rolled into Budapest to reinterpret this doctrine, Gomulka proclaimed himself a "realist." It would not be entirely surprising if, notwithstanding the continued purge of Stalinist diehards from key positions in Poland, the victory of the revisionists should witness an attempt to terminate *popular* revisionism. The problem of its control transcends, however, the narrow framework of party doctrine. Poland first and Hungary later provided a pattern of anti-totalitarian revolt: the literary ferment was followed by a movement among students heading the discontented intelligentsia and joining forces with the workers in what became a nation-wide protest against foreign domination and internal oppression. The young elements of the population provided its dynamic force: the students from the Warsaw Technical High School, the young workers from the Zeran and Zispo factories, etc. The articulation of their demands and the effectiveness of their pressure were made possible by the split within the Party of which the doctrinal crisis was only one reflection.

[25] J. Kott, *op. cit.*
[26] *Trybuna Ludu*, October 29, 1956.

29

THE CHALLENGE TO SOVIET ECONOMICS

By Alfred Zauberman

WHEN the history of the Polish " spring in October " comes to be written it will have to apportion the shares of two social forces which together brought about the amazing transformation of the political scene. One was growing discontent and disillusionment of the workers; the other was a more articulate ferment among the intellectuals, in which the economists played a signal part. This is hardly surprising: as the gags were removed a vigorous debate revealed a disturbing tale of errors, waste, follies, and muddle in the nation's economy, and this " campaign for truth " turned rapidly into a fully-fledged inquest into governmental policy.

It was natural, then, that public opinion should look to the economists for help. Their national congress (held early in June) touched off an intellectual revolt. The point of departure was the slogan of decentralisation in economic planning and administration—an innocuous term which has been fashionable for the past few years both in the Soviet Union and among the satellites. Once the heart-searching had begun it spilled over quickly from the officially assigned channels and soon engulfed wider fields of economic policy. For years, Polish economics had remained in the strait-jacket of Soviet doctrine. Hence the revolt had a relevance which transcended the limits of economic thought properly so called.

It may be recalled that the economists' meeting took place at an early stage of the " thaw "—several weeks before Poznan. What today, looking back, may appear timid and circumspect, was in the climate of the time surprising boldness. A good deal of intellectual camouflage had still to be applied. This may

account for the fact that so many participants protested their Marxian allegiance, and that the Marxian-Socialist model was accepted by everyone present as a basis of discussion. Now it can be quite consistently argued that some *rapprochement* is feasible in " techniques " between Western and Soviet economics without infringing the maintenance of Marxian orthodoxy. It was therefore on this point that the Polish economists felt the walls could be breached most easily. The call for readmission of the Western intellectual tool-box had become overwhelming. Yet it should be borne in mind that for decades the guardians of Soviet orthodoxy have been smelling heresy wherever they suspected even the most timid attempt to smuggle into Soviet economic thinking any of the Western methods of analysis or its instruments. As far back as twenty years ago, the chief luminary of Soviet economics, Academician S. Strumilin, was condemned for his endeavour to revive the " equilibrium approach," and the editors of *Planovoe Khoziaistvo*, who published his paper, had to make a public apology and describe such an approach as " counter-revolutionary." [1] The guardians also came down heavily on any attempts to operate by some terminological sleight-of-hand on the dangerous frontier of marginalism.[2]

Yet the Polish economists are loud in clamouring for permission to use these proscribed methods. Did not Marx—one of them argued—use all the scientific methods accessible in his lifetime? Why should not his disciples avail themselves of a century's progress? [3] There was no hope of making the price structure of a Socialist economy rational unless one resorted to Western concepts. Professor Lipinski very ingeniously pointed out, in a footnote to one of his papers, that one could find a budding marginalist analysis in Marx himself.[4] (Oskar Lange, who tried to ride the storm at the congress, was reminded that after all it was he who, in his brilliant contributions to the

[1] *Cf.* this writer, " Economic Thought in the Soviet Union," in *Review of Economic Studies*, vol. xvi (1), No. 39, p. 1.

[2] *Cf.* this writer, *Soviet Studies*, vol. i, p. 329.

[3] A. Brzeski, " Report from the Second Congress of Polish Economists " in *Ekonomista*, 1956, No. 5, p. 104.

[4] *Nowa Kultura*, 1956, No. 39, p. 3.

Western doctrine of Socialist economics, had contended that Soviet theory could not provide adequate guidance for the management of the economy unless it incorporated the methods and techniques of marginal analysis.[5])

Some of the economists who denounced the "prejudice" against Western techniques [6] seem to have conceived the notion of a curious marriage of Western and Eastern economics. In their thinking, the instruments of Western economics would become the Marxian economist's technical equipment in dealing with short-run relationships, while orthodox Marxian tools would be reserved for *long-term* analysis of a somewhat sociological type.[7] But quite a few economists were not satisfied by mere concessions in technique, and have raised the banner of a more fundamental rebellion. They denounced Marx's monopoly of doctrine; as one of them put it, doctrinal monopoly does not prove its validity, while on the other hand a valid doctrine does not need any monopoly.[8] As one would expect, the resistance of the diehards is at its fiercest here: Marxists—one of the faithful retorted—believe "invariably that the (only) true political economy is the Marxian one."

The sense of frustration and the bitterness of feeling among the overwhelming majority of Polish economists over their separation—enforced for so many years—from the stream of Western economic thought, was perhaps best expressed by Professor Lipinski when he wrote in one of his recent essays: ". . . and thus we arrived at a point in history where the social institutions, the economy, and nearly the whole superstructure have begun to fail us . . . and there we stand helplessly facing the future . . . we apply obsolete or primitive intellectual tools; hence we cannot efficiently co-operate in the building of a new world. This is why freedom of thought and freedom of criticism have become the basis and the premise of the further development of socialism."

[5] O. Lange, *The Economic Theory of Socialism*, p. 141.
[6] Professor J. Zieleniewski, "Report . . . ," *op. cit.*, p. 100.
[7] This is how the tendency was presented to the group of British visiting economists by their Polish colleagues. *Cf.* J. R. Sargent (of Oxford), *Zycie Gospodarcze*, 1956, No. 19, p. 7.
[8] A. Brzeski, "Report . . . ," *op. cit.*, p. 104.

As has been indicated, the Polish rebellion in economics is closely connected with the drive to overhaul the economic mechanism which—by common consent—chronically produces unwanted goods in the wrong quantities and delivers them at the wrong time to the wrong place: a mechanism which by definition should have secured a planned and harmonious economic growth, but has brought about a chain of dangerous disproportions: " . . . disproportions between the expansion of agriculture and that of industry, disproportions between capacities in industry and the supply of materials, disproportions between quantitative increase of output and its quality and costs, disproportions between investment and production programmes and technological obsolescence of many plants." [9] The *malaise* is largely attributable to reliance on a Soviet-type economic " model " of centralised and direct administrative coercion rather than on the instruments of economic policy proper. The system has with good reason been described as " war economy " [10] perpetuated into peacetime.

To some Poles—not only the theoretically minded, but also practical economists—a panacea appears to lie in a market of one kind or another within the framework of the socialist " model." The idea is, of course, not alien to Western socialist thinking. Attempts at theoretical construction have been made with special ingenuity by Lerner and Lange [11]; in a sarcastic reference to them, one of the critics remarked that in their model, except for State ownership, everything would be just as it is under capitalism; socialist enterprises would produce for the market, compete with each other in the market, tend towards market equilibrium, and try to pocket maximum profits.[12] The ideas which have gained currency in Poland do not go as far as this, at least not yet. The most active exponent of the " built-in-market " school is Professor Brus,[13] a remarkable convert from strict orthodoxy. He advocates a market for consumer goods

[9] O. Lange, *Zycie Gospodarcze*, 1956, No. 14, p. 1.
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] *Cf.* O. Lange's *The Economic Theory of Socialism*, and A. B. Lerner's *The Economics of Control*, New York, 1944.
[12] W. Fabierkiewicz, " Report . . . ," *op. cit.*, p. 100.
[13] W. Brus, " Report . . . ," *op. cit.*, p. 86.

and something rather vaguely resembling it for producer goods as well. However, in the world of his ideas it is not the market but the central planner who would fix the prices (although the Brus school would instruct the planner to fix them at a market equilibrium level). There seems to be complete unanimity among Polish economists—much as they may differ on other points—that the Polish price structure is lunatic (but did not the architect of the model, Stalin himself, admit in his last contribution to economics that the Soviet price structure is topsy-turvy?). How is one to ensure that now, under Professor Brus's instructions, the reprieved sinner—the central planner—behaves rationally? For once one may perhaps share the doubts of the diehards who argue that such sham-market prices cannot produce an "Archimedean point of support" for the proposed structure.[14]

One would perhaps be unfair to the advocates of the new ideas were one not to mention that they ask, *inter alia*, for readmission of interest into the Marxian economic system. Now interest, and generally speaking cost of capital, has been banished from Soviet economics. It is one of the paradoxes that in the Soviet Union, and the countries of her sphere of domination, that is, in the world which suffers from an acute and chronic shortage of capital, capital has no price. Some suggestions have been made by Soviet theoreticians with a view to reintroducing something of the sort under a respectable guise, but all of them have come up against orthodox opposition. Thus throughout the Soviet-controlled world, the practical economists complain that they are at sea when facing a choice of investment alternatives, since they don't know what is the price of the capital they would have to spend on each of them.[15]

In this and other matters the Soviet economic witch hunters have certainly been given a severe shock by the recent happenings in Polish economic thought, which they considered part and parcel of their intellectual domain. In fact they have now had to swallow a few not-too-complimentary remarks made in

[14] M. Pohorille, "Report . . . ," *op. cit.*, p. 120.
[15] *Cf.* this writer, "A Note on Soviet Capital Controversy," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, vol. lxix, No. 3, p. 450.

the Polish debate. There is a vigorous revulsion against the obligatory glorification of the official textbook of Soviet economics which is supposed to codify all its available and permitted wisdom. In fact, as one of the Polish economists quite rightly protested, in this work " . . . all life, all the profound sense of Marxism, has been weeded out " and Marxism reduced " to wooden, vulgarised, and dead formulas." [16] (By now we have grown used to some courageous words being said on things Russian in the captive areas. It is therefore worth noting that this harsh statement was made quite a time before Poznan !) No less bitter for the Soviet economists must have been the comment on the " harmonious paper-world of slogan and phraseology " or on academic teaching " based on an anti-Marxist, anti-rational, anti-scientific medieval method . . ." [17] or on the " fetishist, maniaco-black-magic approach " to problems of economics and economy.[18]

This brief sketch may give an idea of the strains and stresses on the periphery of Soviet economics. Will they leave unaffected the citadel itself? That is perhaps the most fascinating question now that the political upheaval has taken place.

[16] Z. J. Wyrozebski, " Report . . . ," *op. cit.*, p. 114.
[17] H. Hagemajer, " Report . . . ," *op. cit.*, p. 107.
[18] E. Lipinski, *Nowa Kultura*, 1956, No. 37, p. 9.

30

THE BACKGROUND OF HUNGARY'S REVOLT

THE East European upheaval of October-November, 1956, was rooted in a complex pre-history of political oppression and economic exploitation throughout the satellite area. Before turning to the antecedents of the Hungarian uprising—the most dramatic and the most tragic part of the East European revolt—it is advisable to consider some general features of Soviet policy throughout the region.

The over-all picture since 1945 has been characterised by a mechanical application of Russian models, notably in the economic sphere, where each satellite country was encouraged to turn itself into a small-scale replica of the USSR. Each had to develop its own heavy industry and invest in plant which could only be made to pay on the basis of long-range plans provided by big markets. One consequence was that a large proportion of investment resources was locked up in unfinished projects. Another and more serious result was that the various countries were wasting their resources through the neglect of regional specialisation, and failing to develop export markets. The new five-year-plans for the period 1956–60 show a tendency to correct these mistakes, but the change came too late to prevent an explosion. As matters stand, it appears to be the intention to encourage regional planning, previously neglected in favour of co-ordination of each individual plan with that of the USSR. Thus Rumania is to concentrate on the expansion of petroleum chemicals, while East Germany seems to have been given the role of supplying the remainder of Eastern Europe with heavy engineering equipment. Czechoslovakia, the most industrialised country of the bloc, has suffered least from Moscow's erratic policies and has consequently remained quiescent up to date. Although Czech living standards are

lower than pre-war, they are higher than in neighbouring countries, and the nation's export trade indicates that its light and heavy engineering industries are increasingly able to compete with those of the West.

Hungary, by contrast, suffered most from Soviet control of its economic destinies—even more than Poland, where Wladyslav Gomulka disclosed a depressing economic balance-sheet in his first major address as First Secretary of the Central Committee. The original Hungarian production plan for 1950–55, as published in 1949, was substantially revised upward in 1951, when much higher targets were set. These remained unfulfilled by 1953, when the first Nagy Government in turn took steps to reduce the pressure and pay more attention to consumer demands. With the replacement of Nagy by Rakosi in February, 1955, the balance was once more tilted in favour of heavy industry. This trend was emphasised by the 1956–60 five-year plan, the final draft of which was published in May, 1956. The wet summer which followed led to an appallingly bad harvest, and even before the revolt the country faced a bleak winter.

This trend was aggravated by the reversal of the Nagy Government's more liberal peasant policies. During the brief Nagy experiment in 1953–55, the peasants had been permitted—in fact encouraged—to leave the collectives. When the Rakosi Government once more put pressure on them to return, it worsened the political tensions while at the same time it disclosed its own inability to furnish the collectives with farm machinery. Fewer than 1,000 tractors were produced in 1953. This was a bad year, but the supply is generally far short of the demand. In the urban sector, the Nagy Government had stimulated retail trade and consumer demands, so that retail trade turnover rose by almost a quarter in value, and retail sales of manufactured goods by one-half in one year, while food production increased at double the 1953 rate. With Rakosi's return in 1955, the expansion of consumer goods output was checked. The purpose of the new policy was revealed when the 1956–60 five-year plan was published in May this year—two months before Rakosi's replacement by Gero, four months before the latter's meeting with Khruschev and Tito in the Crimea, and five

months before the outbreak of the revolt. The plan showed an estimated rise of ten per cent. in heavy industrial output during the current year, against two-and-a-half per cent. for the consumer industries. For the entire five-year period, heavy industry was to receive investments valued at 28,000 million forints (£850 million), while the consumer industries were to obtain only 2,300 million forints, the food industry 2,400 million, and the building industry a mere 1,000 million. Nor was anything planned to correct Hungary's excessive dependence on trade with the Eastern bloc which at the moment accounts for 70 per cent. of the country's total foreign trade (as against 20 per cent. before the war). Practically one-third of this trade is with the USSR, from which Hungary now draws almost all her iron ore supplies. The regional specialisation plans referred to earlier do at least enable Hungary's heavy industry to produce for the benefit of Rumania and Bulgaria; even so, the country's pre-war trade structure has been violently distorted, and unlike Czechoslovakia and East Germany, Hungary has been unable to gain an extensive foothold in Western export markets.

All the official boasts about having turned Hungary from a backward agricultural into a modern, balanced agricultural-industrial State could not conceal from the Hungarian public, and especially the working-class, the fact that this process was being carried on at the expense of living standards in the present and the foreseeable future. The post-Stalin economic policies were either not carried out, or else they were given a twist which deprived them of their usefulness for the consumer, *e.g.*, the Hungarian five-year plan, which had previously been geared to that of the USSR, was now geared to the plans of the other East European satellites. This type of purely technical and administrative reform was associated with the political rise of Erno Gero, the economic planner who took over from Rakosi last July. His emergence presaged a continuation of previous policies, an estimate fully confirmed by his behaviour during the crisis last October.

This background of constantly heightened economic pressure has to be kept in mind when one considers the train of events leading from Rakosi's enforced resignation in July to the revolt

three months later. In the interval, the Communist leadership tried to regain some public confidence without relinquishing its basic policies. This complex manoeuvre turned to a large extent on the issue of the Party leaders' relations with Imre Nagy, Prime Minister in 1953–55 and self-confessed exponent of the "liberal" trend. After Rakosi's resignation in July, the leadership announced several times that Nagy would be rehabilitated, on condition that he engaged in frank and full "self-criticism," *i.e.*, that he repudiated his previous policies. This Nagy refused to do, and eventually he was restored to full rank without having confessed his sins. This was in clear contradiction to a demand formulated earlier by Deputy Premier Gyorgy Marosan, who told a Patriotic People's Front meeting in Budapest [1] that Nagy must first apologise for his past behaviour:

> Some people have asked why the settlement of the Nagy affair has been delayed. Our Party leaders take the view that it would be right to re-admit Imre Nagy to Party membership. However, this step can be taken only if Nagy exercises frank self-criticism and accepts the July resolutions of the Central Committee.

Instead of doing so, Nagy, on October 4, sent a letter to the Central Committee in which he asked for reinstatement and demanded a reply from the Politburo.[2] The latter replied without giving any indication whether Nagy had "confessed" his past sins. The implication was that he had not. In any event his Party membership was restored to him.

A day before Nagy wrote his letter, on October 3, the Central Committee had indicated the direction of the prevailing wind by announcing its decision to organise a State funeral for the "rehabilitated" Communist victims of the 1949 treason trials: Laszlo Rajk, Gyorgy Palffy, Tibor Szonyi and Andras Szalai, "militants and revolutionaries who . . . as a result of political errors of past years were innocently condemned and executed." [3] The funeral took place on October 6, and was attended by a crowd of some 200,000 people who marched past the graves,

[1] *Szabad Nep*, September 24, 1956.
[2] *Ibid.*, October 14, 1956.
[3] Radio Budapest, October 3, 1956.

while such active Politburo members as Andras Hegedus, Istvan Kovacs and Antal Apro formed a guard of honour, together with the widows of the four men executed during the Rakosi era. The mass turn-out presumably reflected a desire to demonstrate against the régime in general. This was obliquely recognised by at least one of the official speakers, the Deputy Premier, Antal Apro, who acknowledged in his speech that the executions had "weakened—if only temporarily—the faith of many hundreds of thousands of Hungarian workers in the superiority of Socialist truth and morality." He added that those responsible for the crimes of the past would be called to account, and also assured his audience that similar illegalities would not occur in future. In an obvious reference to Rakosi, he spoke of "Stalinist methods" and the "personality cult," adding that the "slanders" against Rajk in 1949 had been connected with "slanders against Comrade Tito and other distinguished leaders of Yugoslavia." Another official spokesman, Ferencz Munnich, condemned Rajk's execution by "sadistic criminals who emerged from the gutter of the personality cult." [4]

This was the signal for an attempt to replace some of the more sinister figures of the police organisation and to rehabilitate a number of their former victims. On October 14, *Szabad Nep* reported that State burials had been granted to two former police officials, Bela Korondi and Otto Horvath Honigsberg, and to some former military men—Laszlo Solyom, Gusztav Illy, Istvan Beletnay, Gyorgy Porffy and Kalman Revai—all of them victims of the 1949 purge. By contrast, the Gero Government now announced the arrest of some former Security Police officials,[5] Vladimir Farkas, Ervin Faludi, Gyorgy Szendi and Gyorgy Szanto, for crimes against "Socialist legality." This action by implication reflected upon the father of one of the arrested men, the former Defence Minister, Mihaly Farkas, who had left office with Rakosi in July. On October 12 a Radio Budapest reporter was told by the Minister of Justice, Erik Molnar, that Farkas's case "belongs to the Prosecutor," and on the following day *Szabad Nep* reported his arrest. On October 15,

[4] Radio Budapest, October 6, 1956.
[5] *Szabad Nep*, October 11, 1956.

Radio Budapest commented that Rakosi himself seemed to be involved, adding that the former Party leader was too deeply implicated in past crimes and mistakes to return to political life. Finally, on October 16, exactly a week before the outbreak of the revolt, *Nepszava* announced that Rakosi had left the country —presumably for the USSR.

The intellectual ferment in Hungary, which was to have such dramatic repercussions in late autumn, may be said to have been sparked by the rebellion of the writers' association against political thought control. The attempt at liberalisation originally made by the Government of Imre Nagy in the summer of 1953 —a Hungarian counterpart of the Malenkov episode in the USSR—started in the economic domain, but soon found vent in the cultural sphere, where a number of leading writers— including veteran Communists—came out for greater freedom in the arts. This brief liberal spring-time ended with Nagy's fall early in 1955, following which the Stalinist faction once again asserted itself all over the field. A resolution passed by the Central Committee in March, 1955, underlined the " leading role " of the Party in literature, and sharply denounced the " slanders " directed against it. Joseph Darvas, Minister of Culture, in a broadcast reported in the Party newspaper *Szabad Nep* on May 25, 1955, spoke out against " ideological confusion and enemy influences " and declared that " self-criticism had been overdone and had degenerated into self-torment and a wholesale bourgeois revision of the entire Party line." This official reprimand did not prevent such well-known Communist writers as Gyula Hay, Tamas Aczel and Tibor Dery from continuing the " right-wing " campaign against Party pretensions in literature. A climax was reached on November 14, 1955, when the Communist fraction of the writers' association, at a special session, decided to defy bureaucratic censorship and formulated a memorandum (published in *Irodalmi Ujsag* on October 6, 1956, *i.e.*, eleven months later) which " respectfully " asked the Central Committee to desist from " anti-democratic practices " (*i.e.*, administrative measures against critics). After vainly trying to secure a retraction on the part of the 63 signatories, the Central Committeee replied with an official condemnation of

their petition [6] as an "anti-Party platform which was addressed to the Central Committee for the sole purpose of demonstrating against the Party at membership meetings and elsewhere," its signatories being described as "rightist enemies who voiced bourgeois slanders." In protest against this display of Stalinist rigidity, eight members of the presidium of the Writers' Union, including all the leading Communist authors, resigned from their posts. The official reaction was to threaten further material sanctions, and Istvan Kovacs, the Budapest Party Secretary, presumably voiced the official view when he declared: "We have been too indulgent with the writers."

In the light of what has since come to pass, this seemingly insignificant squabble between the Party leaders and the Writers' Union takes on a sinister significance. The fissure between the régime and the intellectuals reflected an as yet unacknowledged state of affairs in the country as a whole. When the "Petöfi circles" (named after the literary hero of the 1848 revolt) broadened their membership and began to take up such non-literary themes as the fake trials of the Stalin era, the execution of the "national Communist" Rajk, and the general state of affairs under police rule, they gave vent to feelings which could not express themselves in normal forms. Throughout the spring and summer of 1956, the struggle between the authorities and those intellectuals who, while officially committed to the régime, were becoming increasingly critical of its practices, merged with the de-Stalinisation campaign unleashed by Khrushchev's report to the XXth Congress. The writers now had the backing of Party functionaries shocked by the revelations about Stalin's rule. By late August it was plain that the tide was running in their favour. In mid-September the penalties earlier imposed upon the eight leading Communist writers who had resigned their functions in December, 1955, were lifted. At the same time, Darvas—a steadfast follower of Rakosi and, as Minister of Culture, largely responsible for the official line in literature—made his self-criticism: he had, he said, come to the conclusion that, although acting in good faith, he had by his actions

[6] *Irodalmi Ujsag*, December 10, 1955.

harmed both literature and the Party. This confession set the tone for similar self-exculpations on the lower level.

Hitherto the writers had contented themselves with attacking the "personality cult" which had allegedly poisoned Hungarian literature. "May Socialist Realism come at last," wrote Hay in the *Irodalmi Ujsag*.[7] Four months later, more radical demands were voiced, and the same Hay, writing in the same newspaper, asked for freedom to believe or disbelieve official statistics, to think, or not to think, as a Marxist, to be sad, to believe in God, etc. During the September, 1956, session of the Writers' Union, the reburial of Rajk, and on other occasions in September and October, several writers asked for the elimination of the "sectarians" (*i.e.*, Stalinists) and even for their punishment. This demand was first voiced in early September in *Muvelt Nep*, the organ of the Ministry of Culture, by Geza Losonczy, himself a former victim of the Rakosi era. The general mood was perhaps best expressed in the concluding lines of Tamas Aczel's "Ode to Europe," published at about the same time:

I do not want to make apologies, I lift my head
The tears on my eyelids dry and in my heart as well
Now there is but a little pain—that I was so stupid
And believed—proudly—that I know more than Thee
And so it is and cannot be changed.
It is not worthy of reflection, it is past—gone.
The guilty will be punished for it
The misguided turn to Thee, Europe
Give us thy hand, let us make peace, and go further . . .
This little nation would also like to live
I know that it depends on us—but believe me
We are now doing what we must
Europe, our common mother, we return to Thee
Set an example, show us how,
As you have done for centuries,
We are one, no matter what the sages preach
Or the priests, whose dark touch caused souls to stiffen
Not they but we are living
Europe before whom the barriers are lifted
The gates are opened for millions of simple people
Oh homeland, humanity, creative restless life,

[7] May 5, 1956.

Stay with me and Thee, be with us, Europe,
Common fate, love, work, future
Oh, beating heart, pure truth
To plow, to sow, to harvest, to die and rise again a thousand times.

In an interview given in Brussels on November 29, Anna Kethly, the veteran Socialist leader who briefly figured in the short-lived Nagy Government set up hurriedly before the second Soviet intervention on November 4, confirmed the widespread impression that the revolt was sparked by writers and students whose specific grievances against the régime were still held within the framework of "socialism," as officially interpreted. The movement then grew into something more serious because, in Miss Kethly's words, "it had the workers behind it." Here we are concerned with the formative stage of the revolt, when its spokesmen thought they could achieve something like freedom without challenging the Party's rule as such. The reasons why this attempt failed, whereas in Poland it succeeded, lie outside the scope of this report, which is concerned with the stages whereby what was in origin an anti-Stalinist protest movement by Communist intellectuals transformed itself into an attempt to re-establish something like genuine liberty as understood in the democratic world. This part of the general national movement against the Rakosi-Gero régime—the two men were never separated in the public consciousness, for all the official efforts to make it appear that a genuine reformation of the leading personnel had taken place since July—may be said to have crystallised in mid-September, *i.e.*, some weeks before the Party leadership made its halting attempt to canalise the mounting unrest in the country by rehabilitating the "Titoist" purge victims of 1949. Some connection doubtless exists between the partial dismantling of the police régime and the growing activity of the intellectuals; *e.g.*, there was a sudden announcement on September 14 that sixteen priests had been amnestied, while on September 25 *Szabad Nep* announced the rehabilitation of Mr. Kalman Santha, a leading neurologist. In between, the Writers' Union had held their congress which was destined to set the ball rolling.

The congress opened on September 16, and by the time it closed, five days later, it was clear that the anti-Stalin rebels had won the day. The two hundred participants who gathered in Budapest Town Hall gave overwhelming support to the handful of consistent rebels who for the past year had tried to throw off bureaucratic control and restore self-government in the intellectual field. The new presidium elected on the first day contained not a single supporter of the old Stalinist leadership; their place was taken by dissident Communists, non-Communists recently released from prison, and non-Party authors friendly to the general principles of the "people's democracy," but uncommitted to the régime. Peter Veres, head of a small pro-Communist Peasant Party, was re-elected chairman, the two co-chairmen being the dissident Communist Gyula Hay and the non-Communist Aron Tamasi. Other members of the presidium included writers who had taken part in the December, 1955, "literary rebellion" and had been forgiven by the Party, but it also included Tibor Dery who had been expelled from the Party and was still in disgrace (as was made clear in a *Szabad Nep* editorial on the following day).

According to an uncensored report of the proceedings which appeared in the Writers' Union weekly *Irodalmi Ujsag* on September 22 (itself a considerable innovation and a sign that official controls were slipping) Veres opened the meeting with a highly unorthodox speech on the subject of political tyranny, while Geza Kepes, a translator of Western poetry, denounced the literary censorship, and other speakers went so far as to discuss the position of Imre Nagy.

Gyula Hay and Tibor Meray (another of the eight rebels) were quoted as speaking in similar terms, Hay urging the writers to "form a defensive and offensive alliance to tell the truth," while Meray declared that the issue was literary freedom "which is inseparable from the people's freedom." Here the ambiguity which was finally to ruin the whole movement already disclosed itself, for "freedom" as understood by these writers pointed to political conclusions which the Russians and their protégés could not well be expected to swallow.

What M. François Fejto, in an article published in the November number of *Les Lettres Nouvelles*, of Paris, has described as the "Independent Republic of the Hungarian Writers," took final shape during the succeeding fortnight, when *Irodalmi Ujsag* formulated the rebels' credo in the course of a running debate with the Party organ, *Szabad Nep*, which had been shocked by the goings-on at the congress. After the Party's *agitprop* specialist, Sandor Nogradi, had attacked the doctrine of literary freedom from the approved orthodox standpoint (". . . not every truth is the people's truth"), *Irodalmi Ujsag* replied, on September 29 and October 6, with a series of articles in which proposals for greater liberalisation *within* the Party insensibly blended into demands for more or less complete freedom *outside* the Party. Thus Sandor Lukacsy, a young writer who had been expelled from the Party because of his activities at Petöfi Club meetings, urged that the debates of the Petöfi Circle should be published—which would have been equivalent to striking at the Party's monopoly of information—while another writer, Emery Demeter, demanded to know why Western newspapers were still unavailable, and Pal Szabo inquired why Hungarian war prisoners were still held back in the USSR. This was already a plain appeal to Hungarian patriotic sentiment against the "alliance" with the Soviet Union. Unlike the British rebels' "floating republic" at the Nore in 1797, the Hungarian "writers' republic" lacked guns—at any rate during this phase of the rebellion. Yet the intellectuals clearly felt that a powerful wind was filling their sails, or they would not have exposed themselves so far. It seems evident that at this stage the official censorship had ceased to function, and the reason is plain: the authorities had been caught between their own controlled "de-Stalinisation" campaign and the spontaneous rebellion of the intellectual élite. They were being urged by the de-Stalinisers in the Central Committee (and in Belgrade) to make an end of the Rakosi régime, and were consequently reluctant to clamp down on the intellectuals whom they tried to win to their side. Thus a bare fortnight before the mass demonstration of October 23, which Gero's intransigence finally

transformed into an armed rising, the intellectual élite of Budapest had already won freedom of speech for themselves. They were now engaged in widening the area of free speech to take in the public as a whole.

It remains to be added that, as they were the first to launch the movement, the writers were also the last to realise that it had failed. M. François Bondy, who spent three days in Budapest at the height of the rebellion (October 31 to November 2), has recorded conversations with Gyula Hay and Tibor Dery which indicate that during this brief hour of Nagy's seeming triumph they thought they had won. Dery in particular told him that " this is simply the greatest revolution in Hungarian history, and the most beautiful." He added that he thought it would be Hungary's first truly victorious revolution. Even on the following day, when rumours of Soviet intervention were already causing panic in political quarters, he found the writers supremely confident that their movement had achieved its goal. It is noteworthy that Dery at least was insistent throughout these conversations that politics should be approached in a Marxist way, and that in discussing the restoration of political parties one ought to consider what social interests they represented. Dery was in fact an old-line Communist who had spent the war years in the underground. He felt no grudge against Gyula Hay and George Lukacs (the Party philosopher, now reportedly sharing Nagy's Rumanian exile), who had spent these years in Moscow. His dislike was reserved for Rakosi, Gero, and Revai—the literary dictator of the Stalinist period. The presence of this old-guard Communist among the leading rebels at the height of the popular rising is among the features of the Hungarian rebellion which *Pravda* has found it difficult to explain even to Communists.

What has happened since then confirms the impression that the Soviet ideological emissaries have consistently failed to persuade the remnants of the Hungarian intelligentsia that Soviet military intervention was really necessary. Thus *Literaturnaya Gazeta*[8] reports a meeting of the Writers' Union in the presence of Soviet delegates, but with most of the well-known Hungarian authors unaccountably absent. The attitude taken

[8] December 1, 1956.

by the Hungarians at this meeting was sharply criticised by A. Romanov, a Soviet participant, who complained that "to our regret we did not sense in their remarks the sincerity that comes from the heart." They are taken to task for "denying that there was a threat of counter-revolution," for alleging that deportations had taken place, and for taking up the complaint made by Cuba at the UN about "genocide" in Hungary. "The atmosphere was not one of a friendly debate at all . . . we felt that the ideological poison in the heads of many Hungarian writers is a serious hindrance in defining their position under the new circumstances."

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THE EDITORS

Walter Z. Laqueur is the author of *Communism and Nationalism in the Middle East* and editor of the forthcoming symposium *The Struggle for the Middle East*. At present visiting Professor in International Relations at the University of Chicago.

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